Equal Opportunities for All Foresters?

"The road of progress must be trodden by both sexes."
Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk) 1923

The ISU Forestry Department and Forestry Club took a big step down the road of progress when they recognized the need to hold the workshop: "Equal Opportunities for all Foresters? Women and Men Working Together."

Initially, Dr. Thomson, Forestry Department Head, felt there should be a special workshop for women to give them an opportunity to discuss their role in Forestry. However, at the wise insistence of the females on the planning committee, the workshop was opened to both sexes. This gave the men and women enrolled in Forestry a chance to discuss mutual concerns of employment, career development, and the competition and cooperation involved with the mixing of sexes in a once-masculine profession.

The workshop was held Oct. 14 and 15, with six speakers representing many facets of forestry. The evening seminar opened with speeches given by the guests. They stressed many personal experiences relating to their particular jobs; the joys as well as the challenges involved with working in the field of forestry. Speakers included: Kate Hutcherson, an assistant district forester of the South Carolina Piedmont District with Westvaco; Louise Odegaard, an ISU '71 graduate in outdoor recreation, presently of the Mark Twain National Forest. Christine Walroth, senior forester with Owens-Illinois Inc., Big Island, Va.; Thomas Wood, director of the Lake Superior Basin Studies Center in Duluth, Minn. Beckie Judge Curran, a biologist at the Study Center; and Roberta Moltzen, in charge of hardwood research with the Scott Paper Co., Mobile, Ala.

The single female forester is met with a variety of problems and challenges as she begins work in a predominately male field, but as Chris Walroth quotes one of her supervisors, "Problems are opportunities to be dealt with and used to your advantage; not brick walls in your path."

The female forester, as well as other minorities, is often met with more scrutiny and skepticism than the male forester. She is pushed into believing that she is only hired to fulfill Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) requirements. This may lead her to compete against her male co-workers as she tries to prove her competence. Roberta Moltzen says that the female forester should just concentrate on doing her best; learn to work with men and not against them. "Don't become paranoid about filling a quota, an incompetent female is let go just as easily as an incompetent male."

Kate Hutcherson feels that in some instances the female forester is somewhat limited in her physical capabilities, a shortcoming she cannot let defeat her. The forester must realize that there are many different niches to fill in the field of forestry and not all foresters are equally qualified in all areas. Certain female qualities may be especially suited to certain jobs; for instance leading a nature hike for children. The female forester does not have to reject her sex to be a professional.

Tom Wood goes on to state: "Women have proven that they can take on a traditionally male task and still maintain a concept of self that doesn't cause them to reject their sex. The difference between male and female can inject a sense of vitality in an organization stagnated by sameness. Creativity and in-
A Farewell to Dr. Bensend

"Dear Dr. Bensend,

You have been so generous to those whom you have touched here at Iowa State. You have given some of us the path to a professional career. You have armed others with 'respect for the next man.' You have opened up many student's minds to a real love of learning. And God bless you, you've made us laugh.'"

In a Sunday afternoon reception 140 faculty members, students, and friends gathered to honor Dr. Bensend. Dean Kolmer presented him with Professor Emeritus. Dr. Thomson handed Dr. and Mrs. Bensend a deerskin purse containing $200 in silver dollars from the faculty and alumni. Both awards tried to express materially how appreciative we are of Dr. Bensend's 30 years of service at ISU.

novativeness can blend with required routine and tediousness by having people with different needs, abilities, and values."

Many times the female forester finds it difficult to be treated as a professional. This is especially true when, as Louise Odegaard stated, "the males you work with act as either your father or your brother or your lover." These men have to recognize the fact that not all female foresters are in the field because they want to play with baby deer, or because it is a fad, or because they are out to get a husband. They are in the field because they want to be professional foresters, treated with equal respect and consideration, not as daughters, sisters, or lovers to the males they work with.

Other problems can arise when a female forester is working with married male foresters. Many wives do not like the idea of their husbands spending time in the field with a single female. There can be a strain on the marriage as well as the working relationships of the foresters working together. "The female forester must be careful," according to Moltzen. "Get to know the wives. Ask them how they feel about you working with their husbands, and tell them how you feel.'"

Marriage is another issue the female forester must deal with. She will need to make a decision on whether or not she sees it in her future and how this will effect her career. Kate Hutcherson hopes that when that decision needs to be made, she will be able to choose according to her own personal desires and not feel she has to "jump on the Women in Forestry Bandwagon and support the 'cause' rather than get married and perhaps raise a family."

All of the speakers felt that the forester's success in coping with these various problems and issues depends on their ability to communicate openly and honestly. The problems have to be voiced before they can be solved.

The atmosphere of the workshop allowed these problems to be voiced, giving the student foresters in attendance some new insights and very favorable impressions.

Rachel Anderson felt that the workshop helped develop a real comradeship within the department. "It was a great sharing experience and I felt like I gained a lot of personal support as a female in forestry."

An advisor and instructor, Steve Jungst, said that the workshop gave him some good insights on how he could better serve his female advisees.

According to Carole Gillespie, "The speakers gave us an indication of what we are up against when we get into the 'real' world.'"

Curt Krambeer felt the workshop was a real success. "It opened my eyes to problems that I never realized existed and made me reflect on my own thoughts and behavior with the hope that I can be a part of the solution rather than a part of the problem."

The workshop's two seminars are over, but the impressions and inspirations remain alive as the students and faculty begin to apply them toward the establishment of better working relationships. This is the beginning of the practical experience of working together that will continue as they enter the professional field of forestry.