

In a certain way the volume succeeds probably better than the authors and editors imagined; it is the *design process* that holds our attention as readers, not the specifics of a given project. Perhaps future editors of these proceedings will take a page from the design lessons of this volume, and devise a plan that will permit the electronic publication and dissemination of future proceedings, perhaps a plan that would permit the clinic to be conducted online. Such a system might have the added advantage of making the fruits of the clinic available to the intended audience more quickly, enliven the discussion, broaden the audience, and bridge the gap, even more deeply felt in these times, between the act of creating knowledge and giving it an enduring format.—*Jim Coleman, Research Libraries Group, Inc., Mountain View, California.*

**Maack, Mary Niles, and Joanne Passet.**

*Aspirations and Mentoring in an Academic Environment: Women Faculty in Library and Information Science.* Westport, Conn., Greenwood, 1994. 232p. \$49.95 (ISBN 0-313-27836-9).

Greenwood presents this volume as "the first book-length study of women in library education." That it took until 1994, after more than a century of library education, to develop such a book already tells us a great deal about women in library education. The authors, themselves library educators, have examined career development, opportunities and obstacles, and the effects of mentoring.

Beginning in 1989 and running through 1990, the authors first held discussions with women faculty at eight library schools in various regions of the United States, conducted telephone interviews with one hundred women (out of the 236 full-time female faculty in accredited U.S. library schools and programs), and presented preliminary findings at the 1990 annual conference of ALISE (Association for Library and Information Science Education) in Chicago. The comments of five library school deans at that meeting are included in the book.

Maack and Passet have read widely in relevant material from librarianship, education, sociology, and social work, and their bibliography includes both classics in the field (Clifford Geertz, David Riesman, William Chafe, Robert Maynard Hutchins, etc.—all men, you'll note) and current writings about mentoring, and careers in academe. They define a mentor as "someone senior to you in the field who actively works for your advancement. A mentor can also be a role model." In the course of their research they soon found that it made a difference when female faculty got their education and began their academic careers, so they divided their respondents into three cohorts: those who graduated from college before 1955 (35 women), those who graduated between 1956 and 1965 (32 women) and those who graduated in 1966 or later (33 women). We can recognize from the dates some of the events that affected those who lived through each period—the Depression of the Thirties, World War II, the feminist movement.

Carefully and conscientiously, the authors document from their sample the benefits many women faculty have derived from mentoring and being mentored. Starting at home with the influence of mothers and fathers, many women begin to assess their roles in the world around them, and many of the respondents in this study found encouragement and direction in their families. Even negative mentoring—parents who sought to steer their daughters into safe havens of marriage and family—can serve to push determined women toward careers in academe. For many women mentoring does not play a major role in their education until they reach the graduate level. At that point faculty, most often the dissertation adviser, can play a crucial role in the long slogging process toward a degree. He or she can encourage, point out areas of research, coauthor articles or papers, clarify the tortuous roads of academic politics—or, on the contrary, become one of the barriers women in academic positions have to batter down or climb over. Almost all the

women interviewed have encountered barriers and, very often, these are gender barriers. Women have learned that there is indifference or outright antipathy to their entry and advancement in faculty positions. The authors announce early on that they "occupy an 'engaged' position," not one of "neutrality or impartiality," and it is to their credit that they know the limitations of "objectivity."

On the whole this book is a valuable contribution to library education literature, although there might be some question about whether it is as valuable as its \$50 price. Nevertheless, the book suffers from some of the absurdities of much social "science" writing. It is replete with the jargon of sociology. Discussions become "focus group sessions," influences become "orientation others," by which they mean parents, or "role specific significant others," by which they mean faculty colleagues and such. The book includes a plethora of tables, charts, graphs and other "illustrations" and the usual hiccuping style of "serious" writing: (Rich, 1986), (Chamberlain, 1988: 372), (see Appendix A, table A-1), etc., but it's probably wise to accede to accepted forms no matter how unhelpful. What is more disturbing is

what Maack and Passet leave out. They refer very briefly to the pressures on academics, and women academics in particular, to strive for competence rather than significance in their writing, since innovative research leads to fewer papers and less recognition. What it really leads to is *controversy*, which the authors don't mention and which certainly limits one's chances of advancement to tenure. From this study one might conclude that there are *no* minority women on library school faculties or enrolled in library doctoral programs. Is this true? Then shouldn't it be noted? Are the career problems of an African American or Asian American or Latina woman different, more severe, less mentored? No such questions ever come up in the book. Finally, the responses to the interview questions (listed in Appendix E) have been codified, analyzed, and reported, but what would have made this a more riveting book would have been the stories, biographies, asides of these one hundred women who have clambered up the academic ladder. But then that kind of book wouldn't have qualified as a "refereed publication," which is what counts in the academic arena.—Fay M. Blake, *University of California, Berkeley.*