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A Women's Page Pioneer: Marie Anderson and Her Influence at the *Miami Herald* and Beyond

By Kimberly Wilmot Voss and Lance Speere

In 1971, when Miami feminist and National Organization for Women leader Roxcy Bolton submitted a list of women qualified for political office in Florida, she naturally included the name of *Miami Herald* women's page editor, Marie Anderson.¹ After all, Anderson had spent the past two decades laying the groundwork for the feminist movement by covering gender discrimination and inequities in the Miami area and fighting for women in the journalism profession. Bolton, who had launched a successful 1969 challenge to the Miami practice of maintaining separate "men only" sections in downtown restaurants,² said of Anderson: "She made a difference. Womenkind are [sic] better

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1. "Roxcy Submits Names," *Orlando Sentinel*, 8 November 1971. Fellow women's page editor Gloria Biggs sent a note to Anderson pledging her vote if she decided to run for office. Marie Anderson Papers, Box 1, Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri. Hereafter cited as Anderson Papers.
2. *Miami Herald*, 15 October 1969. The Florida Memory projects include several letters from the restaurants and from the community detailing the protest and its outcome. See <http://www.floridamemory.com/OnlineClassroom/RoxcyBolton/documents.cfm>. (accessed April 1, 2006).

off for Marie Anderson for reporting the truth.”³ Bolton’s praise for Anderson raises important questions about the intersection of traditional publications for and about women and the modern feminist movement of the post-World War II era.

Although the women’s page enjoyed a history that stretched back into the nineteenth century, most historians, like the male editors and publishers of the day, dismissed the genre as inconsequential “society” news. Often generalized as having little important content, women’s sections were defined by the four F’s: family, fashion, food and furnishing.⁴ However, during the 1950s and 1960s, as modern feminism emerged, the women’s section in metropolitan newspapers used their platform to report on the women’s movement and publish stories about issues that affected women—domestic violence, the Equal Rights Amendment and reproductive rights.⁵ Stories published in major urban newspapers with high circulation figures reached large audiences and influenced the work of other editors and leaders in the feminist movement.⁶ The interaction between editors⁷ and their influence over women’s page content swayed public attitudes, affected reforming outcomes, and shaped public policy.

In her role as women’s page editor of the *Miami Herald*, Marie Anderson included a mix of hard and soft news and brought topics to public attention that reading audiences of the 1950s and 1960s seldom saw in local news journals. Despite her long journalistic history and her impact on the field, Anderson’s story had slipped from public memory until the Washington Press Club launched its “Women in Journalism” oral history project in 1986. Devoted to the goal of providing “an important documentary

3. “Marie Anderson, 80, Pioneering Herald Editor,” *Miami Herald*, 2 July 1996.
4. See Barbara Belford, *Brilliant Bylines: A Biographical Anthology of Notable Newspaperwomen in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986); John Jakes, *Great Women Reporters* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1969); Madelon Golden Schlipp and Sharon Murphy, *Great Women of the Press* (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983). As late as 2005, the American Press Institute described lifestyle section content as food, fashion, and family. www.americanpressinstitute.org (accessed May 2005).
5. Marion Marzolf, *Up From the Footnote* (New York: Hastings House, 1970), 20.
6. Rodger Streitmatter, “Transforming the Women’s Pages: Strategies That Worked,” *Journalism History* (1998): 77.
7. See Vivian Castleberry and Dorothy Journey in *Women in Journalism* (Washington Press Club Foundation) <http://npc.press.org/wpforal/ohlome.htm> (accessed April 1, 2006). Castleberry also mentioned that fellow women’s page editors Maggie Savoy and Gloria Biggs often interacted.

record of the experiences of women in seeking acceptance in journalism and the impact that this development has had on reporting and editing of the nation's news,"⁸ the project identified sixty women who influenced journalism from the 1920s to the 1980s. Only four women's page editors were included in the group: Anderson, Vivian Castleberry, Dorothy Journey and Marjorie Paxson.⁹ By the time the Foundation interviewed Anderson, she was suffering from the effects of Alzheimer's disease and much of her oral history is unusable. Despite the limitations her disease created in researching her life, Anderson's story highlights the nuanced nature of women's page journalism, and this research is intended to fill in the blanks of her life and demonstrate her importance in the newspaper industry and as an advocate for the feminist view in 1950s and 1960s Miami.

Anderson spent most of her career at the *Miami Herald*, editing the women's section at a time fellow women's editor Marjorie Paxson described as the "golden age" for women's pages.¹⁰ During that period, Anderson transformed the section from one with little important content to one that addressed emerging women's issues. Her work led to numerous national awards and gave her a platform to share her views with other journalists. Lee Hills, editorial chairman emeritus of Knight-Ridder, which then owned the *Miami Herald*, said of Anderson: "She helped to lead the transition from the traditional women's pages to the modern newspaper living section, making the *Herald* a pioneer in that trend."¹¹ Women's movement leader Catherine East said she subscribed to

8. *Women in Journalism*, Washington Press Club Foundation, <http://npc.press.org/wpforal/ohhome.htm> (accessed April 1, 2006).

9. In addition to these four, other women's page editors who have received scholarly attention include Marie Sauer of the *Washington Post* and Charlotte Curtis of the *New York Times*. See Mei-ling Yang, "Women's Pages or People's Pages: The Production of News for Women in the *Washington Post* in the 1950s" *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* (1996): 364-378; Marilyn, Greenwald, *A Woman of the Times: Journalism, Feminism, and the Career of Charlotte Curtis* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1999). One of the few resources about early women in Florida journalism can be found in Jean Sneed's 1970 *A Historical View of Newspaper Women of Florida*, available through the *Florida Journalism History Project* <http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/jour/fljhist/index.html>

10. Marjorie Paxson quote was inserted by Anne Kasper in the introduction to Marie Anderson's interview. *Women in Journalism*, Washington Press Club Foundation, <http://npc.press.org/wpforal/ohhome.htm> (accessed April 1, 2006).

11. "Marie Anderson, 80, Pioneering Herald Editor," *Miami Herald*, 2 July 1996.

the *Miami Herald*, despite living in Washington, D.C., in order to see what strong women's pages were covering.¹² Gail Godwin's 2006 semi-autobiographical *Queen of the Underworld* included a composite of Anderson in the character Marge Armstrong. In assessing Godwin's work, the *Herald* called Anderson a trail-blazer who "transformed women's-page journalism into an arena for politics and social issues."¹³

Anderson's story is important to our understanding of the intersection of modern feminism and the women's sections of metropolitan newspapers. Too often, historians have focused on the *Washington Post* or the *Los Angeles Times* as leaders in updating the content of women's pages.¹⁴ Shifting the focus to a smaller urban daily opens a window onto the transition of coverage in women's sections during the 1950s and 1960s. In the employment of Anderson, the *Miami Herald* proved to be a leader among second tier papers in instituting changes that appealed to local readers. According to one report, Anderson relied on local content to fill the women's pages of the *Herald*, with as much as 78 percent of the content supplied by her reporters rather than wire service stories.¹⁵ Her reliance on local coverage established the women's page as a resource for Miami women, especially in the Jewish and Cuban communities.¹⁶

Anderson's journalistic career emerged from a childhood steeped in Florida's boom years. Born in Pensacola in 1916, Marie Willard Anderson was the only child of her upper-middle-class parents. Her father, Robert Hargis Anderson, the oldest of eleven children, traced his Florida roots to mid-1800s Pensacola.

12. Noted by Anne Kasper in the introduction to Marie Anderson's interview, *Women in Journalism*, Washington Press Foundation, 7 October 1989.

13. Margaria Fichtner, "Miss Fired: As a rookie *Miami Herald* reporter, Gail Godwin got canned; as a novelist, she rewrites the story," *Miami Herald*, 23 January 2006.

14. Kay Mills, *A Place in the News: From the Women's Pages to the Front Pages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 118.

15. George Beebe, "Women's Pages in 1973," *The Bulletin* (1 February 1963), 2 [Please check this reference. The dates do not match.]

16. This is not to imply that there was equality in coverage among minority communities, nor that there was equality between communities. As the *New York Times'* Charlotte Curtis noted in 1965: while Miami had the third largest Jewish population among American cities, "there was still no Jewish members in the Surf Club, the Bath Club, or the Indian Creek and La Gorce Clubs." See "Sociologist on the Society Beat," *Time*, 19 February 1965, www.time.com (accessed 4 April 2006).

Anderson's mother, also named Marie Willard Anderson, was born to an unwed mother in Philadelphia; the mother later married a baker and moved with her husband and daughter to Barstow, Florida.

Anderson's mother and father met while students at Stetson University in DeLand, Florida, where both earned law degrees. Anderson claimed that her mother was one of the first females to obtain a law degree and pass the bar in Florida, though she never practiced. She described her mother as "beautiful, purposeful, yet unsure of herself."¹⁷ On another occasion, while commenting on her mother's failure to practice law, Anderson noted that she "wasn't very good at running the house all that much either."¹⁸ In contrast her father served as a member of the state legislature and later became a circuit court judge.¹⁹ She described her father as "smart, witty, unable to do household repairs, etc." In explaining her homelife, Anderson revealed a complex family dynamic when she admitted, "We all tried to communicate with each other but didn't do it well."²⁰

Anderson's life was economically comfortable and included educational and travel opportunities unavailable to most Floridians. She spent her childhood in Jacksonville, Florida, before moving to Miami, where she attended high school. Although the South Florida economic collapse and Great Depression soon plunged the state and the nation into economic crisis, she often summered in Colorado and golfed in Miami.

After high school graduation, Anderson and her mother visited the colleges of Vassar and Wellesley, but she decided to attend Duke University because she wanted to "stay in the South."²¹ At Duke, she majored in English and later explained that although she liked to write, it never occurred to her to major in journalism. As she recalled "You did have to be somewhat of a personality to be a creative writer. All the kids who wrote for the literary maga-

17. Marie Anderson, *Questionnaire for the Woman Administrator*, undated. Box 3, Anderson Papers.

18. Marie Anderson, *Women in Journalism*, 3.

19. "Marie Anderson," Theta Sigma Phi press release, 24-28 July 1971, Box 2, Anderson Papers.

20. Anderson, *Questionnaire for the Woman Administrator*, Box 3, Anderson Papers.

21. Anderson, *Women in Journalism*, 8. Anderson's oral history, as well as other documents, indicate that she only attended Duke University, although her *Miami Herald* obituary lists Sullins College in Bristol, Virginia.

zine or the campus newspaper were sort of peculiar and I was just a standard, garden-variety coed."²² At age 21, Anderson graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Duke University. After a trip to Europe, she returned to Florida where she spent a year doing volunteer work and playing golf before moving to New York City to live with her former sorority sisters. There she took courses at the Katherine Gibbs Secretarial School and worked at a New York advertising agency.

By the time Anderson returned to Florida, the world had changed. In April 1941, Miami Beach became a training camp for the U.S. Army, and the local Junior League organized women to volunteer at the Filter Center²³ where they assisted the more than 100,000 Army Air Corps Officers who trained in Miami over the course of World War II. Anderson was among those who worked at the servicemen's center. Her attitude toward volunteerism reflected the patriotic demands of the day and the expectations of female employment that had been reinforced by the Great Depression. As she explained: "It still didn't occur to me to get a job because I thought you worked only if you needed the money. So I became the Available Women. I was available to every cause that came along."²⁴

While she was volunteering at the center, Anderson met Kay Pancoast,²⁵ a Cornell University graduate very active in the Miami community, who supervised Junior League activities at the servicemen's club. The two stayed in touch even after Anderson returned to New York and in 1946, Pancoast wrote to Anderson offering her friend a position in the women's department of the *Miami News*. In her letter, Pancoast indicated her intentions in regard to the future of the women's department. "I hope little by little," she wrote, "to cut loose from the woman's angle, or as it is usually

22. Marie Anderson, *Commencement Speech*, Everglades School for Girls, Miami, June 1963. A note dated June 6, 1963 and signed by Headmistress Gertrude C. Pierce, documented that "in all our long history we have never had a better commencement speaker—and I question whether we ever will." Box 3, Anderson Papers.

23. Carmen Morrina, *The League Goes to War* (The Junior League of Miami) at <http://www.juniorleagueofmiami.com/warhistory.html> (accessed 3 January 2006).

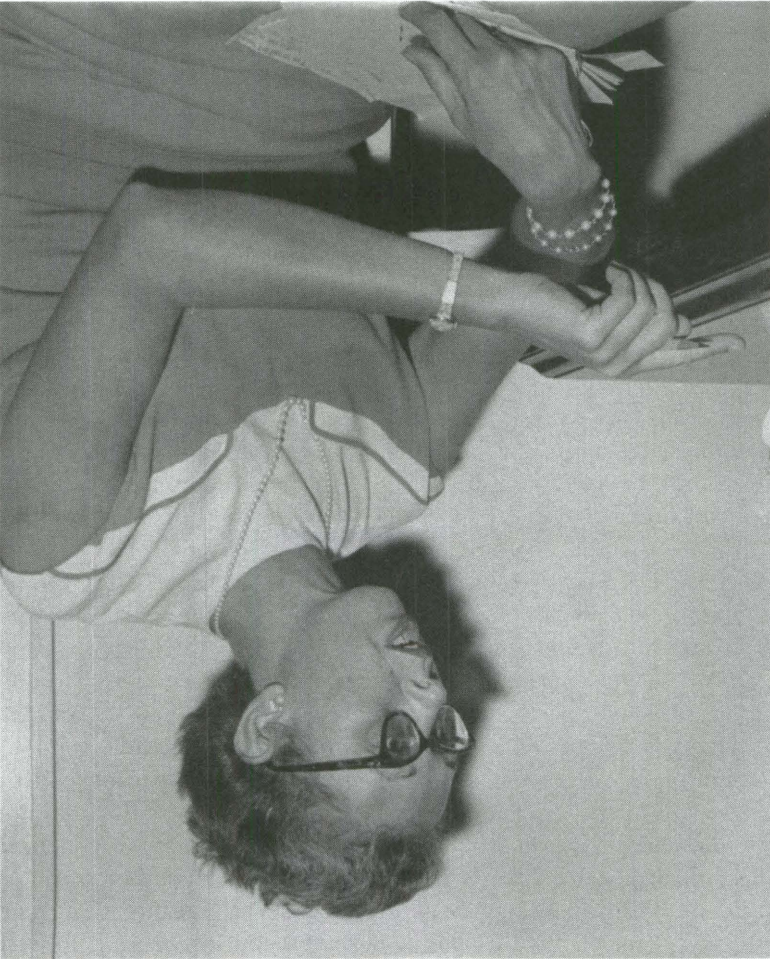
24. Marie Anderson, *Commencement Speech*. Marie Anderson Papers, Box 3.

25. Marie Anderson Papers, Box 3.

26. Letter from Kay Pancoast to Marie Anderson, 25 July 1946, Marie Anderson Papers, Box 3.

thought of . . . [a]fter all, women are interested in more things than fashions and food."²⁶ Her determination to change news directed at women was no idle intent as she assured Anderson of her progressive view in a second letter two weeks later. Commenting on the activities of a mutual friend, Pancoast revealed her expectations

Marie Anderson as a *Miami Herald* reporter in 1959 Photograph courtesy of Western Historical Manuscript Collection University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri



tions for women living in the post-World War II-era: "It seems funny to think of her as a housewife with no outside job,"²⁷ she wrote. Pancoast described the job at the *News* as "hard work," and she acknowledged that "there is pressure. . . [and] there will be discouraging times." But she also assured Anderson that journalism was "interesting and rewarding."²⁸ Anderson succumbed to Pancoast's persuasions and joined the staff of the *Miami News* in the fall of 1946. Almost two decades later, she explained her decision in practical terms, claiming that it was not a love of journalism that determined her decision, but the \$50 per week that that position paid.²⁹

At the time she joined the *Miami News* staff, Anderson had little inkling of her future in journalism. With no background in newspaper work, her first education in journalism consisted of shadowing co-worker Dorothy Journey. The pairing of the two women proved beneficial for the novice. When the two met, Journey already had experience at the Gary, Indiana, *Post-Tribune* and on the city desk of the Washington, D.C., *Daily News*. A graduate of Northwestern University, Journey learned every aspect of newspaper management—from selling subscriptions to layout to recognition of press type—under the supervision of her father who ran the *Michigan City News*.

Journey's views about women's roles in society had been shaped by her mother, Mary Hershey Misener, a suffrage activist and one of the first women elected to the Indiana legislature.³⁰ While in office, Misener sponsored and fought for Indiana's first voter registration law.³¹ In discussing her views on women's roles, Journey said, "I guess I was always a feminist. My mother was a feminist, certainly. I was not as outspoken about it, but it was part of my values."³² In later interviews, she claimed that her coverage of issues pertaining to women's rights preceded the second wave of the

27. Letter from Kay Pancoast to Marie Anderson, 9 August 1946, Marie Anderson Papers, Box 3.

28. Letter from Pancoast to Anderson, 25 July 1946, Anderson Papers, Box 3.

29. Alice Samuels, "Inquiring Photographer," *Columbian* 1965. Florence Burge Papers (82-26/II/2) Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno, Nevada.

30. Dorothy Journey, *Autobiography*, 28 September 1988, Dorothy Journey Papers, Box 3, Folder 106. Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri. Hereinafter cited as Journey Papers.

31. *Ibid.*, 1.

32. Dorothy Journey, *Women in Journalism*, Session 1, 16, Washington Press Club Foundation.

women's movement and supported her claims with several stories about gender-based discrimination and the lack of opportunities for women in the 1950s. Journey's experience in journalism and her feminist perspective shaped Anderson's views as she learned the newspaper business from her colleague.

Anderson and Journey also became friends outside the office. The women, with Anderson's mother and Journey's husband, Frank, often played poker together on Saturday nights.³³ During one of these sessions, Journey pulled Anderson aside and told her that she was leaving the newspaper. Journey had decided to quit after numerous fruitless requests to be moved to a different section in order to hone her journalistic skills. Ironically, Journey's opportunity came not in a section change, but as women's page editor at a rival newspaper.

Hired by the *Miami Herald* in 1949, Journey earned the honorary title of "godmother" of the women's pages for her inclusion of hard news on pages previously devoted to home and social events. Her philosophy proved a match for Lee Hills, managing editor of the *Herald*, who had overseen the women's section since the early 1940s.³⁴ In making his case for joining the *Herald*, Hills told Journey: "Something needs to be done about the women's section over here." He invited her to "take on the women's editorship so that we [can] get something in the paper that is worth reading," suggesting that women were interested in more than clubs, organizations, and the home.³⁵ A year later, Journey brought in Anderson to become the assistant editor at the *Herald* in a partnership that transformed the city's women's news.

Building on the work of the previous editor, Arletta Weimer, and with the support of Hills, Journey "built one of the nation's outstanding women's sections."³⁶ Journey and Anderson, who joined her friend at the *Herald*, continued to run stories about food and fashion, but added articles about political and social issues, fea-

33. Anderson, *Women in Journalism*, 23.

34. Frank Angelo, *On Guard: A History of the Detroit Free Press* (Detroit: Detroit Free Press, 1981), 208. Hills was an executive with Knight Newspapers, which had purchased the *Miami Herald* and the *Detroit Free Press*. In 1939, Hills hired Arletta Weimer to revamp the women's section; she left the *Herald* to join the *Washington Post*.

35. Marzolf, 209.

36. Nixon Smiley, *Knights of the Fourth Estate: The Story of the Miami Herald* (Miami: A.E. Seeman Publishing, 1974), 267.

tures about professional women, and Eleanor Roosevelt's daily "My Day" column. They also had an important impact on the reading public by "covering such issues as housing needs in the black community" and running stories on women's employment opportunities, problems facing widows, and foster care for children.³⁷

In 1956, Marjorie Paxson, a women's section journalist with a national reputation, joined Journey and Anderson at the *Herald*, where she remained until 1968, when she left to edit the women's page at the *St. Petersburg Times* before becoming the fourth female publisher of the Gannett newspaper chain. Paxson brought hard news experience to the *Herald's* women's page. She had earned a journalism degree from the University of Missouri and worked for the wire services during the war at a time when many male reporters were in the military. She had spent several years as a women's page editor for two Houston newspapers and was looking for a challenge when she wrote to Journey, whose career Paxson had followed. When Paxson joined the *Herald* staff, she worked as a women's page editor under Anderson's supervision. Describing the management styles of Journey and Anderson, Paxson noted, "Where Dorothy could be very strong and forceful, Marie was very low-key. But she got things done just the same."³⁸ She later described Anderson as "inspirational" in her approach to progressive content.³⁹

Movement from one metropolitan newspaper to another was common practice among journalists and it created networks of editors and managers who supported good reporting. Anderson's career benefited from these frequent moves as they advanced her status as a journalist and provided contacts with other nationally-known editors. In 1959, Lee Hills, who had been at the *Detroit Free Press* since 1954, hired Journey to revamp that city's paper as she had done in Miami.⁴⁰ Anderson filled the vacancy left by her friend and moved up to the position of editor, installing Paxson as her

37. Cokie Roberts, *We Are Our Mothers' Daughters* (New York: Perennial, 2000), 114; Letter from Harry Tyson, Florida State Employment Service, to Roberta Applegate, 10 June 1953, Roberta Applegate Papers, Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri; Letter from *Miami Herald* editor George Beebe to Laura Ross, undated, Applegate Papers. In the letter Beebe praised the stories.

38. Marjorie Paxson, *Women in Journalism*, Session 2, 50.

39. Marjorie Paxson, Telephone interview, June 2003. Notes in possession of the author.

40. Smiley, 267.

assistant editor. Though separated by hundreds of miles, the three women remained friends, writing regularly and visiting in one another's homes.

Anderson stepped into a position already nationally recognized for innovative content development. Under the supervision of managing editor George Beebe, she imprinted the women's section with her own journalistic style, prompting Beebe's boast that "our women's department is so highly regarded that it has the same stature as the news, city, sports and financial desks. It rates its own daily section, with a wide-open cover for emphasis."⁴¹ Beebe encouraged Anderson and her staff to reduce traditional content and stress local coverage, support she used to great advantage.

Taking up the editorship on the cusp of the revitalized women's movement, Anderson was not content to rest on past praises and pressed forward in her efforts to bring progressive content to the women's page, no doubt frightening the same supervisors who praised her work. Historian Anne Kasper said of Anderson, "When the women's movement erupted, Marie saw increased possibilities for reporting news about women and she took significant risks in printing stories which management found disturbing and too controversial."⁴² For example, in a bold move, Anderson ran excerpts from Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique* at a time when the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Washington Star* refused to review the controversial book.⁴³ The *Herald's* women's section published stories about birth control, the sexual revolution, unmarried couples living together and women's medical concerns. When the Nixon administration suppressed a task force report on women, Anderson obtained a leaked copy and made it available as a 25-cent brochure.

Although Anderson wrote a weekly column, "Monday Musings," she engaged in little reporting herself; instead she used her influence to assign important stories to the journalists under her supervision and established more rigorous standards for reporting women's page news. In one example, she encouraged Club Editor Roberta Applegate to apply the new standards to the

41. George Beebe, "Women's Pages in 1963," *The Bulletin*, 1 February 1963, p. 2.

42. Anne Kasper, "Introduction to Marie Anderson Interview," *Women in Journalism*, Washington Press Foundation, 7 October 1989.

43. David Broder, *Behind the Front Page* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), 126.

coverage of club news. This approach had two related outcomes: the featured stories highlighted community needs and they persuaded Miami's women's clubs to undertake serious discussion of the issues and action to address the problems.⁴⁴ Applegate embraced the news approach in the women's section as she had hard news experience in Michigan covering state government for the Associated Press during World War II. Although she continued to cover more traditional women's home and family news, Applegate also reported on women in the workplace. Following a 1953 series on working women, a manager in the Florida State Employment Service wrote a laudatory letter in which he expressed the conviction that "the increase in applicants applying at this office can be attributed directly to the information contained in this series."⁴⁵

As the name implied, Anderson's weekly column spanned a range of topic from local events to humorous observations. She occasionally addressed more serious issues, sometimes humorously, and at times in language that grates on the ears of modern feminists. In a 1964 column she advised women to stop dressing for men.⁴⁶ That same year, she chastised local leaders for their treatment of a female candidate for office, suggesting that "A female manager might not be as laughable as it sounds. You can't deter a dedicated woman and the commission members might gallantly show her more respect than they've shown."⁴⁷ Two years later she addressed sexist images in advertising when she wrote tongue-in-cheek, "Airlines need a male equivalent of those bunnies they carry if they want to cater to their growing female passenger trade."⁴⁸ Years before the U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Roe v. Wade*, Anderson tackled women's reproductive issues and expressed her support for abortion rights. In a column headlined "It's a Sticky Situation" she wrote: "If there were fewer unwanted babies who get a bad start in life, we might not have so many

44. Applegate's role in helping women's clubs focus on serious issues rather than "frivolous" activities was noted in a May 9, 1954 letter from club woman Betty Jensen to *Miami Herald* Managing Editor George Bebee. *Miami Herald*, Folder 34, Applegate Papers.

45. Letter from Harry Tyson to Roberta Applegate, *Miami Herald*, Folder 34, Applegate Papers.

46. Marie Anderson, "Baited Breath," *Miami Herald*, 16 November 1964.

47. Anderson, "Limbo Limbo," *Miami Herald*, 21 September 1964.

48. Anderson, "Look Ou-u-u-u-!", *Miami Herald*, 31 October 1966.

grownups who come to a bad end."⁴⁹ Anderson's "musing" demonstrate her courage in confronting controversial issues and suggest the growing self awareness of Miami women as they grappled with conventional expectations and new possibilities.

Anderson not only covered women's movement issues, she dealt with them in her workplace. Numerous studies conducted during the 1960s demonstrated pay inequity for women's page journalists. It was a topic Anderson confronted at her own newspaper and in national forums. Her 1963 address to the Associated Press on the topic of women's page inequities played out at home as she fought for raises for her reporters. An undated letter from reporter Helen Wells thanked Anderson for her raise: "My morale has gone up 100 percent to know that you appreciate my struggles and I've never had a raise that I appreciated more."⁵⁰ Anderson encountered obstacles in rewarding even the most experienced journalists. In a note informing Applegate of her raise, Anderson wrote: "You continue to be someone I can turn to when I need help, whether it is in production, story gathering or training new people and advising on community problems."⁵¹ Despite the obvious merits of her work, Anderson had to battle for Applegate's raise.

Although she included hard news in her section, Anderson continued to address the traditional four "Fs": family, fashion, food and furnishing.⁵² Interspersed with conventional women's page fare, the *Herald* reported on women's roles at the 1964 Republican Convention, profiled Katie Loucheim, a top ranking State Department official, featured stories on female gambling problems, anti-poverty programs, and efforts to protect children against child molesters.⁵³ Some media historians harshly criticize the juxtapositioning of progressive hard news and recipes, believing that the placement of more newsworthy items next to homemaking

49. Anderson, "It's a Sticky Situation," *Miami Herald*, 22 August 1966.

59. Undated letter from Helen Wells to Marie Anderson, Anderson Paper, Box 3.

51. Note from Anderson to Applegate, 22 August, unknown year, Applegate Papers.

52. Mills, 110.

53. "GOP? It Means Gals' Own Party," Associated Press, *Miami Herald*, 18 June 1964; "What Katie Did—Use Imagination," *Miami Herald*, 18 June 1964; "The Press," *Time Magazine*, 19 May 1967, p. 55; "Penney-Missouri Workshop is Another Classic Event," *Southern Advertising and Publishing*, April 1975, pp. 15-16.



Marie Anderson and Dorothy Journey at the 1964 Penney-Missouri Awards ceremony. Photograph courtesy of the Western Historical Manuscript Collection University of Missouri, Columbus, Missouri

advice diminished women's issues.⁵⁴ Anderson was not bothered by the parallel placement; in her view conventional and modern concerns were intertwined. Indeed, the letters Journey and Anderson exchanged showed a similar mingling of traditional and feminist issues. A paragraph addressing women's job inequities might be followed with a discussion of gardening or a description of dishes served at a recent luncheon. In various correspondence, they wrote about hyacinths, new diets, and the health of friends and family. In one letter, Journey included a 1970 magazine advertisement for a resort. In the ad, a young couple stands in the water holding hands. The man's pants are rolled up and the woman's are not. Journey wrote to Anderson: "It's bad enough these people have to push sex at the exclusion of everything else but why do they

54. Gaye Tuchman, *Making News* (New York: Free Press, 1978), 147; Susan Douglas, *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female With the Mass Media* (New York: Random House, 1995), 157.

have to have a pix where he has the sense to roll up his pants and she hasn't?"⁵⁵ The Anderson-Journey correspondence, taken in conjunction with the editorial policies of the women's section, suggest the complex interplay of beliefs and emotions in the advancement of women's agendas and the evolutionary nature of feminist reform.

In addition to her editorial work for the *Miami Herald*, Anderson played an active role in furthering women's issues in the newspaper industry. In 1963, the Associated Press Managing Editors organization (APME) published the results of a 12-month, industry-wide study on women's pages. Under the supervision of Anderson and Maggie Savoy, women's page editor of the *Arizona Republic*, the APME distributed 175 questionnaires to managing editors and women's page editors across the country. The study, designed to assess the content of women's pages, demonstrated an increasing frustration with women's sections from both groups.⁵⁶

In a no-holes-barred presentation before a meeting of managing editors, Anderson and Savoy chided their colleagues for the second class treatment of women's news revealed in the study's analysis of the questionnaires. Editors allotted less space for women's pages than for other news and paid women's section staff 23.5 percent less than other journalists. Women's editors were excluded from staff meetings and had limited access to news wire copy. Anderson believed some managing editors assigned less competent reporters to the women's pages. "If it isn't true," she said of the practice, "you'd better clear the air. If it is true, you made a mistake. If she [the reporter] is no good on the city desk, she's no good in the women's department."⁵⁷ Bolstered by the study's findings, Anderson and Savoy attacked problems that had simmered in the nation's newsrooms for decades.

The women offered eleven recommendations for managing editors to use in their interactions with women's page editors. Upgrading and training staff figured prominently in their sugges-

55. Letter from Journey to Anderson, no day, no month 1970, Anderson Papers, Box 1. For other examples of this correspondence see Journey to Anderson, 27 January 1984, 1 January 1976, 25 July, unknown year, Anderson Papers, Box 1.

56. Marie Anderson and Maggie Savoy, "What Does Your Women's Editor Think of You?" in *Associated Press Managing Editors Red Book*, 1963, Anderson Papers, Box 3.

57. *Ibid.*, 16.

tions. Anderson cited a *Wall Street Journal* report that only 57 percent of journalism graduates were male, a fact that suggested there "should be plenty of good female material around" to staff women's sections. "If you don't have it," she intoned, "hire it or train it." The study also recommended enhanced training for editors. Savoy suggested that newspapers sponsor attendance at seminars organized for women's page editors and provide subscriptions to competing newspapers with strong women's pages. She also suggested that managing editors demonstrate their interest in women's sections by offering constructive criticism. "Criticize her [women's page editor]," she admonished, "she's love it, it shows you care."⁵⁸

Anderson and Savoy acknowledged the resentment most women's page editors felt after decades of half-hearted support for their work. "There's a log-size chip on most of your women's editors' shoulders," they admitted and offered advice on what managing editors could do to "whittle it down." Rather than coddling resentful employees, they exhorted managers to "demand her [women's editor] best." They reassured perhaps reluctant managers, that women's editors would "not only respect you for it; she'll love you for it."⁵⁹ Six years later, a repeat study entitled "How is it going in the women's departments? Or what has happened since Anderson-Savoy?" revealed little progress.⁶⁰ With apologies to "Marie and Maggie," one woman expressed the discontent many no doubt felt: "We're still second (or third) class citizens."⁶¹

Anderson also confronted women's editors and recommended radical changes to traditional formats. In a 1964 article in the industry publication *Editor & Publisher*, she addressed two seemingly sacrosanct women's news items—club notices and weddings. She recommended that editors move club notices to the classified section. Recognizing that editors would protest that "their readers like to read that sort of thing," she wondered "if their readers have ever had the opportunity to read anything else."⁶² She also asserted that

58. Ibid, 19.

59. Ibid.

60. Harry Sonneborn, *Associated Press Managing Editors Women's Committee Report*, 1969, Anderson Papers.

61. Ibid, 15.

62. Dick Sherry, "Women's Page Revolt: To the Classifieds!" in *Editor & Publisher*, 26 December 1964, p. 33.

weddings did not belong in the women's section unless the event had community significance—a heretical idea in the mid-sixties. Although Anderson received criticism for her views, Al Neuharth, an executive with Gannett, sent a note of congratulations in which he praised her courageous stand by noting, "You're way ahead of everybody else."⁶³ Anderson remained undeterred by the criticism and continued to encourage women's page editors to expand their coverage of hard news, at times suggesting such controversial story topics as juvenile shoplifting and unwed mothers.⁶⁴

Anderson's innovative approach led to numerous accolades. She won so many Penney-Missouri Awards she retired from the competition and later served as a consultant to the awards committee. The Penney-Missouri competition, initiated in 1960, was instituted to "stimulate development of better women's pages and encourage excellence in women's news reporting, fashion writing and photography."⁶⁵

Anderson learned that she had won her first award in the competition's inaugural year when her friend and fellow editor, Dorothy Journey called. Typical of the teasing the two shared, Journey indicated that she had telephoned to share the good news of her own selection as the second-place winner in the Penney-Missouri Awards competition. Anderson offered her congratulations and asked who came in first. Journey responded: "You did."⁶⁶ Anderson won four additional Penney-Missouri awards and accepted invitations to speak at the University of Missouri workshops that accompanied the awards. In her 1967 presentation, she admonished women's page journalists to "de-emphasize society activities . . . and emphasize events and features of interest to the whole community."⁶⁷ In her encouragement to transform women's news, Anderson personified the Penney-Missouri competition goal "to break down the traditional editorial barriers which narrowed women's pages in the past to monotonously routine recording of

63. Letter from Al Neuharth to Marie Anderson, 26 December 1964, Anderson Papers.

64. "Virginia's News Seminar," *Editor & Publisher*, 27 May 1967, p. 12.

65. *Penney-Missouri Awards*. J.C. Penney's Papers, Penney-Missouri File, DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.

66. Anderson, *Women in Journalism*, 54.

67. "Penney-Missouri Workshop is Another Classic Event," *Southern Advertising and Publishing*, April 1967, pp. 15-16.

lilac-scented society and club news.”⁶⁸ Worried that women might find it difficult to break out of the standard women’s news format, Anderson offered 1970 Penney-Missouri winners new story ideas that reflected the changed environment of women’s lives:

Women . . . have gone back to work. It takes two to get along now financially. Most working women are heads of families. Does she, as a family head, have the same legal protection as a man? Equal pay for equal work? Many states don’t have the equal law. Why not?

One in ten families is headed by a woman; it’s probably a poverty family. The child care situation is desperate. One newspaper has a working women’s column in a community which established a child care program. We had them during the war [World War II], why not now?

Most young girls are being encouraged only to get a husband or teach these days. Why can’t she be a mathematician and have a husband, too?

If we are producing unwanted babies, what about abortion? Legally women can dye their hair, bulge their busts or slice off their bosoms, but you can’t tamper with the reproductive apparatus.⁶⁹

Anderson left the *Miami Herald* in 1972 to become dean of University Relations and Development at the seven-year-old Florida International University. In response to a survey, she explained her decision to leave journalism for academia. “I was offered a new and challenging job,” she wrote, “at a time I felt I was in a rut in the newspaper business.”⁷⁰ The shift to university administration did not change Anderson’s commitment to feminism and she remained an activist for women.

In February 1973, Governor Rubin Askew appointed Anderson to head the newly-reconstituted 32-member Florida Commission on the Status of Women. Anderson told *Miami Herald* reporter Margaria

68. Letter from Ruth D’Arcy to Virginia Mowry, no date, Penney-Missouri File, J. C. Penney Papers.

69. “Penney-Missouri Awards Tenth Anniversary, 1960-1970,” program, Anderson Papers, Box 4.

70. Marie Anderson, “Questionnaire for the Woman Administrator,” undated, Anderson Papers, Box 4.

Fitchner that she hoped the commission would be “a funnel through which women can express their needs.”⁷¹ In an academic article published that same year, Anderson was highly critical of newspaper coverage of the women’s movement. She complained that even the best newspapers did not cover the movement well and “as a result . . . proponents have to deal with an unenlightened public.”⁷² Anderson understood that spreading the message of the movement could be daunting for a women’s page editor, who lacked a position of power at her newspaper, because she had to “contend with a managing editor who demands a cooking, housekeeping, or child care story for every women’s news story printed.”⁷³ Still determined to transform women’s page content, Anderson now saw the problem from both sides, as an editor fighting the journalistic hierarchy and as an activist using newspapers to publicize reforms.

Anderson remained at the university for five unhappy years. The politics of academia distressed her and she wrote of the experience, “I found out that universities can be the world’s worst backbiters you can ever run into.”⁷⁴ Her disenchantment with the academic setting may also have stemmed from her recognition that her administrative position did not provide the type of control she had as an editor. In a survey, she complained of the work load and bureaucracy: “The mere fact that I’m sitting at this typewriter the day after Christmas has everybody on this floor thinking I’m either a genius or a nut and either way you’re not a follower.”⁷⁵ In the end, she could no longer accept limitations of academic life and retired.

Like most high-profile women’s page editors, Anderson neither married nor had children.⁷⁶ In a speech to female high

71. Margaria Fitchner, “Florida status commission reactivated by Askew,” *Miami Herald*, 13 February 1973, Anderson Papers, Box 3.

72. Marie Anderson, “Communicating—Sins of Omission, Commission & Permission,” *Comment* (National Coalition for Research on Women’s Health and Development, 1973), 3.

73. *Ibid.*

74. Anderson, *Women in Journalism*, 61.

75. Marie Anderson, *Questionnaire for the woman administrator* (undated), Anderson Papers, Box 3.

76. For example, Paxson never married, and Journey never remarried after a brief first marriage. Well-known women’s page editors Gloria Biggs and Kory Dishon married, but did not have children. In her “Women in Journalism” oral history, Ellen Goodman, who was a women’s page reporter at the *Boston Globe* in the late 1960s, recalled that working mothers were often treated with hostility at newspapers during this period. *Women in Journalism*, Session 1, <http://npc.press.org/wpjforal/good1.htm> (accessed 1 May 2006).

school students, she counseled, "Marriage, of course, is a fine institution and I don't want to knock it but don't get upset if you don't make it." In that same speech, she encouraged students to develop their own skills and be independent. "Don't go to college just to find a husband," she lectured. "Be selfish about it. Learn things for your own good . . . It's good insurance to be able to do something on your own."⁷⁷ Her own independent life served as a model for the advice she dispensed to younger women making life decisions about marriage, education, and work.

Anderson enjoyed the company of a community of friends with whom she socialized regularly. Perhaps feeling the need to justify her life choices at a time when most women had husbands and children as constant companions, she explained, "I don't mind being alone. I have lots of friends I feel I can communicate with if I want to."⁷⁸ And Anderson's correspondence bears out her claims of an active social life. In retirement, Anderson and Journey traveled to China, Egypt and India.⁷⁹ In 1979, the two friends took a three-week vacation to New Mexico and Nevada.⁸⁰ When they weren't traveling, Journey often spent weeks with Anderson in her Florida home.⁸¹

Anderson continued to write and in 1980 published a limited edition book entitled *Julia's Daughters: Women in Dade's History*.⁸² Published for Herstory of Florida, Inc., the book profiled the important women in Dade County from 1513 through 1975. From a pool of several hundred nominees, 272 women were selected for inclusion in the volume based on their historical significance, difficulties overcome, uniqueness, or activism for social change. Although her own story fit the criteria for inclusion, Anderson was not among the women cited in the volume. Public recognition of her contributions came later in the decade.

77. Anderson, *Commencement Speech*, 5.

78. Anderson, *Women in Journalism*, 42.

79. *Ibid.*, 66.

80. Letter from Dorothy Journey to J. Edward Murray, 20 August 1979, New Directions for News, Folder 2, Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri.

81. Journey wrote a number of letters to friends while staying at Anderson's home. For example see letter from Dorothy Journey to Virginia Allen, 25 February, Folder 5, and Journey to Allen, 3 January 1984, Folder 22, New Direction for News.

82. Marie Anderson, *Julia's Daughters: Women in Dade's History* (Miami: E. Seeman, 1980).

In 1989, the Washington Press Club Foundation selected Anderson for participation in its "Women in Journalism" oral history project.⁸³ Already fighting against the early stages of Alzheimer's disease, Anderson's responses to questions were occasionally incoherent. At times she remembered specific names and events; at other moments she could not recall major moments and offered answers unrelated to the questions put to her. Her interview transcripts are not available online, although they can be found at various repositories across the country.⁸⁴

Around this same time, Anderson's personal papers were donated to the National Women and Media Collection housed at the Western Manuscripts Collection at the University of Missouri which was established through a monetary donation from her former colleague and friend, Marjorie Paxson. The donation of Anderson's papers was made through Brenda Harrison, her friend for more than twenty years and her legal guardian after 1985, when her mind began to fail. The papers include personal and professional letters, speeches, award information and industry articles in which she was quoted.

Anderson's long struggle with Alzheimer's traversed familiar ground: her mother had also suffered from the disease. In a letter to Journey dated September 30, 1981, Anderson wrote that she was shaken by an article she had read about Alzheimer's and a visit with a friend confined to a treatment facility for the disease: "I read a placard on the waiting room wall that had about seven statements which apparently are updated throughout the week:

Today is Monday.
This Month is September.
The year is 1981."

Recognizing her own fate, she concluded, "I can't remember the rest. I'm beginning to deteriorate, too."⁸⁵

The friends discussed the disease through the 1970s, and

83. Letter from Anne Kasper to Marie Anderson, 23 March 1989, Anderson Papers, Box 3.

84. A list of repositories is available at <http://npc.press.org/wpforal/repos.htm#top> (accessed 1 May 2006).

85. Letter from Anderson to Journey, 30 September 1981, Anderson Papers, Box 3.

86. "Marie Anderson, 80, Pioneering *Herald* Editor," 2 July 1996, *Miami Herald*.

Anderson began to make preparations for her decline. Harrison believed that she “knew what was happening and made arrangements” for the inevitable. The donation of her papers to the University of Missouri typified her efforts to tie up the loose ends. Anderson died on July 2, 1996, at age 80, at an Altamonte Springs retirement home.⁸⁶

In a tribute to her, Randy Nimnicht, president of the Historical Museum of Southern Florida, wrote of his favorite memory—a remembrance that captured the essence of Marie Anderson. She regularly swam early morning laps in her backyard pool.⁸⁷ One morning, she realized an iguana was swimming next to her.

Always one to “live and let live,” she did nothing to disturb the iguana. The next morning her swimming partner reappeared and off they went . . . When I read of her passing, I felt sad. But then I smiled inwardly because hers was a life truly well-lived. Even the iguana sensed how special she was.⁸⁸

Anderson's story is important for both journalism and feminism. Her editorial work at the *Miami Herald* demonstrates the innovative journalism that existed outside the “great” newspapers that have dominated media histories. As a feminist and journalist, Anderson brought the movement message to Miami women. Unlike the *New York Times* women's editor, Charlotte Curtis,⁸⁹ who is often cited for her coverage of the women's movement, Anderson was not conflicted about her role as a feminist. Curtis did not consider herself a feminist and openly questioned some of the ideals of the women's movement. In a personal letter, Curtis observed that “the Women's Liberation, which is to say the very feminist (I'm still not sure that's right) younger generation, are up in arms over my women's pages.” Caught between conflicting views of women's roles, she complained that her opponents called women like her “Aunt Tabbies, which is apparently women's lip (I

87. Anderson's regular swims were legendary. See Gail Godwin, *Queen of the Underworld* (New York: Random House, 2006).

88. Randy Nimnicht, “Swims With Iguanas: Memories of Marie,” *South Florida Magazine* (1996), 2.

89. Marilyn Greenwald, *A Woman of the Times: Journalism, Feminism, and the Career of Charlotte Curtis*, (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1999), 119.

didn't misspell that) for Uncle Tom."⁹⁰ In her coverage of a feminist fundraiser, Curtis wrote: "Many of the women who gathered there are serious about child care centers, equal employment and abortion. Yet their voices were lost amid the tinkle of cocktail glasses, the spectacle of a woman ditching her blue jeans and diving into the swimming pool."⁹¹ More secure in her role as feminist and editor, Anderson's transformation of the women's page enhanced the coverage of women's issues and spread news of the women's movement throughout the Miami community.

Anderson's story supports a revision of the history of women's pages and their role in understanding the women's liberation movement. Although many newspapers filled the women's sections with traditional stories on society events, homemaking columns and wedding news, a number of Florida papers adopted a more progressive content and writing style. Indeed, the women's sections in Florida newspapers of the 1960s defied stereotyping; in the first three years of the Penney-Missouri Awards, Florida newspapers won one-third of the awards for best women's section. Failure to recognize the innovations implemented by newspapers not included among the larger metropolitan dailies overlooks the important role played by women journalists in their efforts to effect change in their individual communities. Indeed, it makes these feminist editors, including Anderson, invisible.

Much of Anderson's work predated the more visible beginnings of the modern feminist movement. Yet, as several scholars have noted, women like Anderson laid the groundwork for the movement in the post-World War II years by introducing questions about gender inequity into the public debate.⁹² Anderson's contribution began in those early post-war years, but continued as the movement gathered steam. Her role on the Florida Commission on the Status of Women in its early pivotal years (1967-1973) and her service as chair of the commission (1973) establish her credentials as a leader in the state's feminist movement, as Bolton recognized in her assessment of Anderson.

90. Ibid, 118.

91. Ibid, 120. This column is included in Charlotte Curtis, *The Rich and Other Atrocities* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1976), 46-49.

92. See Sandra J. Sarkela, Susan Mallon Ross and Margaret A. Lowe, *From Megaphone to Microphones: Speeches of American Women, 1920-1960* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2003), xv.

Journalism histories often dismiss women's pages as "fluff sections" and a "ghetto" for female reporters. To accept such harsh evaluations devalues the work of women like Anderson who fought for change in the newsroom and in the community. While admitting that women's sections retained traditional content devoted to the four "F's," Pamela Creedon suggested that to remain in any field "women must conform in some ways to the norms."⁹³ As one scholar wrote of another Florida journalist, Peggy M. Peterman, "while many of the pioneering women . . . individually do not appear to be symbols of greatness . . . their collective effort . . . brought about many social changes. Anderson adhered to the "norms" on many levels. Likewise, she developed networks of support among women's editors and reporters and within the feminist community. Most importantly, she was a woman of courage, a pioneer in journalism.

93. Pamela Creedon, "Framing Feminism: A Feminist Primer for the Mass Media,"