



Celebrating 20 years of
“a new paradigm”
for Penn.

WHAT WOMEN WANTED

By Susan Frith

Carol Blum Einiger CW'70 was pretty skeptical when Al Shoemaker W'60 Hon'95 called her into his office two decades ago with a "great idea." The chair of Penn's board of trustees wanted to form an organization of high-profile alumnae—sort of an old girls' network to match the old boys' network that had always benefited undergraduate men. Would she be its first chair?

Her plate was already full with work and family. (Einiger was a managing director at the investment firm First Boston, making her the only woman out of about 150 in that position.) And this wasn't the typical pursuit of a successful woman in a male-dominated field.

"Even just 20 years ago, there were plenty of really nice guys who simply didn't believe that women were capable of covering important clients, of doing the important work," Einiger recalls. "The women I knew who had moved ahead in their careers were not the women who joined women's groups. Who had time? You got ahead by working hard and blending in, becoming a strong member of the team."

But Shoemaker persisted and Einiger said yes.

By *not* blending in, the Trustees' Council of Penn Women has helped to change the face of Penn. Since TCPW's founding 20 years ago, its members have donated more than \$173 million to the University, added 29 women to the board of trustees and 71 to the boards of overseers, and given out more than half a million dollars in grants. The group has organized career dinners, adopted women's athletic teams, and brought well-known speakers to campus. It has pushed Penn to hire and promote women faculty, staff, and administrators.

"This is a great milestone for a wonderful group," says Penn President Amy Gutmann. "The Trustees' Council of Penn Women has been a model—at Penn and around the country—for informed advocacy in an academic institution. Because of its work, women are well represented at every level throughout the University, and their voices are heard."

First those voices had to get organized. "We really didn't know what it was we had been asked to do, only that as Penn women we were going to be part of building a new paradigm that would engage and empower women, which is exactly what happened,"

ILLUSTRATION BY GINA TRIPLETT

recalls Elsie Sterling Howard CW'68, a founding member and past TCPW chair.

She credits Shoemaker and Penn's president at the time, Dr. Sheldon Hackney Hon'93, now the Boies Professor of U.S. History, for recognizing that women had been overlooked as leaders and "were being under-mobilized in terms of Penn's financial support."

Shoemaker says he didn't have a particular agenda. "We had this pool of talented young women, and I thought, 'What a good idea if we could empower that emerging group of young executives to create an organization that would support various women's activities.'"

Classmates who hadn't seen each other in years came together for that first meeting, says Howard, and they got a re-education. Civil-rights attorney Gloria Allred CW'63 addressed the group. When the topic of creating a video to promote Penn women's athletics arose, Howard recalls, Allred said, "You've hired a female videographer, of course?"

"There was silence in the room, and that was the moment that we knew what we had to do at TCPW was to champion women for women's sake," Howard adds. "Out of that powerful question came all of the initiatives that we have built up over the past two decades."

One of TCPW's first actions was to organize an annual career dinner and

"Unemployed Cowgirl" Lassoes Beacon Award

Penn President Amy Gutmann placed her among the "giants who not only make history as trailblazers, but also radiate eminence, integrity, and, yes, humor in their professional and personal lives, [and who] leave deep, indelible footprints on the sands of time." But "unemployed cowgirl" was the self-description offered by former Supreme Court Associate Justice Sandra Day O'Connor at the Trustees Council of Penn Women's Spring Conference in April.

The conference was the culmination of a yearlong celebration of the 20th anniversary of TCPW [see main story], which outgoing chair Susanna E. Lachs CW'74 ASC'76 called the first organization of its kind in higher education. O'Connor was on campus to receive the group's "highest tribute," the Beacon Award, given to "recognize an outstanding woman, man, or institution who/that has displayed leadership in furthering the advancement of women, through dedicated pursuit of and commitment to issues affecting women, with results that enhance the status of women," said Lachs, who introduced Gutmann to present the award. Previous winners have included U.S. District Court Judge (and Pennsylvania First Lady) Marjorie



O. Rendell CW'69 and U.S. Senator (and former First Lady) Hillary Clinton—whose presidential campaign prospects, in the days before the Pennsylvania primary, O'Connor tartly refused to handicap.

From her childhood growing up on an Arizona ranch, Gutmann said, O'Connor broke through gender barriers in her academic, political, and, most notably, judicial careers. After being nominated to be the first woman Supreme Court justice by President Ronald Reagan in July 1981, she proved herself "brilliantly adept both at forging consensus and at balancing the role of reason and law against concerns for the impact of rulings on individual lives."

More than a symbol of the changing status of women or the deciding vote in a slew of landmark rulings, O'Connor "became the pivotal associate justice for staking out that middle ground that could bring this country together, where competing and often hotly divided schools of thought could reach reasonable agreement," Gutmann said. "As long as Justice O'Connor sat on the bench, you knew that the center would hold." O'Connor, who lived up to her reputation for down-to-earth feistiness, called the introduction "a little over the top." She praised TCPW as a "great group," and also suggested that someone from Penn speak to Stanford (her alma mater) some time with regard to hiring women presidents.

In her remarks, O'Connor explained that she decided to step down from the court in 2006 because her husband, who was suffering increasingly from Alzheimer's disease, needed to be cared for near their home in Arizona—and



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she dismissed having any second thoughts about the move. (Or doing any second guessing about cases; her former colleagues, she noted at one point, are “on their own.”)

Since leaving the court O'Connor has focused on the issue of judicial independence in her public appearances, and she devoted the bulk of her speech to the subject. She sees the judiciary as being increasingly under attack, citing widespread complaints about so-called “activist judges trying to take control of our lives and do dreadful things,” she said. “I was disturbed because it began to have terrible consequences, so I thought I'd spend a little time trying to remind Americans why the framers tried to establish an independent judiciary and why the states tried to do the

and impartially according to laws and the constitution without fear of retaliation—on the model, to use an analogy favored by the late Chief Justice William Rehnquist, she said, of a ref at a basketball game, who calls a foul against the home team.

An independent judiciary is “hard to create and easier than most imagine to damage or destroy,” O'Connor said. In his 35 years on the bench in the early years of the Republic, Chief Justice John Marshall established the willingness (“by and large”) of the other branches to cede the power to interpret law to the judiciary, and to enforce its rulings. (President Andrew Jackson, who defied a court ban on displacing the Cherokee Indians from their home in Georgia, was an exception.)

But more recently, there have been efforts to “strip courts of jurisdiction over certain types of cases, and proposals to impeach any judge who would dare cite a foreign judge for any purpose,” she said. Furthermore, some states have attempted to deny judges and jurors immunity for official acts, and to retroactively terminate appellate court judges' terms of office. “There's a lot going on.”

The health of the system depends on an educated citizenry, and today's public schools are not meeting that need, O'Connor added, citing a study conducted by the National Constitution Center in which fewer teenagers could identify the three branches of government than could name the Three Stooges. “Now I like Larry, and Moe, and Curly,” she said, “but the poll shows the absence of even the most basic knowledge of the structure of our national and state governments.”

Many school districts don't require classes in civics, government, or American history, or spend limited time on them, O'Connor said, pointing to this as an unintended consequence of the No Child Left Behind Act—since these subjects aren't tested under the law, they may get short shrift. With continued immigration changing the makeup of the population, “we have to get busy on this,” O'Connor urged.

Education in civics must be required, and it has to be taught in interactive, innovative ways, she continued, not just presented through “pages in a book.” Mock courts and personal engagement in student governments are good methods, and O'Connor also called on educators to “capitalize on the computer proficiency of young people.” Along those lines, she announced that she was working with Arizona State University

and Georgetown University to develop a interactive computer program called Our Courts designed for seventh, eighth, and ninth grades, in which users would decide “actual cases” involving the First and Second Amendments as well as other controversial areas of constitutional law. “It's a great way of teaching,” she said.

In a question and answer session following her speech, O'Connor emphasized the importance of personal relationships among the Court's members and the need to be able to “disagree agreeably.” She also expressed irritation at some unwelcome attention she received as the first woman justice—in particular the fact that her opinions, whether in support or dissent, were often reported separately. This practice did not end, she added, until President Bill Clinton appointed Ruth Bader Ginsburg to the Court—which proved that “one is not enough.”

Responding to a question on the challenges facing women in terms of “having it all,” she said, with some heat: “Do it better—and try to do good.”

Before introducing O'Connor, Gutmann had paid tribute to the “intrepid group” that founded TCPW and such “truly enlightened men” as Penn trustees Leonard Lauder W'54 (who was instrumental in bringing O'Connor to campus) and Al Shoemaker W'60 Hon'95, who conceived the idea for what became TCPW as trustee chair during Sheldon Hackney Hon'93's tenure as president.

Shoemaker—who said he and Hackney were looking for a mechanism to let the “cream [of Penn's alumnae] rise to the top”—was honored as the group's “Founding Father” at a luncheon that concluded the conference, which also recognized the “Founding Mothers” who made his idea a reality.

He was presented with a rare 1950s-era beer stein bearing images of the Quad, College Hall, and the Penn coat of arms, acquired by Penn-treasure hunter and TCPW member Susan Molofsky Todres CW'75 WG'77 [“Alumni Profiles,” Mar/Apr 2007]. In addition, the founding father was serenaded with a customized version of “Only You” by founding mothers Carol Blum Einiger CW'70, who was tapped by Shoemaker—her boss at the time—to be the group's first chair, and Judith Roth Berkowitz CW'64, who succeeded her.

As the last event of TCPW's year-long 20th anniversary celebration neared its finish, incoming chair Marjorie Gordon Schaye CW'75 joked, “We're 21—we're now legal.” —J.P.



Founding parents: Al Shoemaker, Carol Einiger, Judith Berkowitz.

same and what we ought to do about it.”

In our government's system of checks and balances, the judiciary's ability to declare statutes or executive acts unconstitutional is the main check it has on the other two branches, O'Connor said. That gives the courts the power to “make presidents, governors, Congress, and legislatures really angry”; in fact, if that doesn't happen occasionally, “we're not doing our jobs,” she said. “And judges' effectiveness relies on the knowledge that they will not be subject to retaliation for doing their jobs.”

James Madison—who, as the Father of the Constitution, “deserves to be heard,” she said—called the judiciary an “impenetrable bulwark against every assumption of power in the legislative or executive.” That may be putting it a bit strongly, O'Connor said, but the U.S. system breaks down without judicial independence. That emphatically does not mean decisions based on judges' personal preferences, but ones arrived at fairly

networking event where undergraduate women could make face-to-face connections with alumnae in their fields of interest and draw inspiration from speakers like NBC News correspondent Andrea Mitchell CW'67 ["Talking Back, Getting Hitched, Speaking Out," Nov/Dec 2005] and DreamWorks Studios CEO Stacey Snider C'82, who was the featured speaker at the TCPW fall conference back in October.

"These women and other TCPW members have inspired our women students to aim high as they plan their own

leaving a "boring" first job as a fact-checker at *Vogue* to join Goldman Sachs, and later going to business school at Columbia. She now runs her own investment firm, Post Rock Advisors, LLC.

Today Penn women can conveniently download podcasts of successful alumnae's advice on such topics as changing careers and workplace diversity at TCPW's website, www.alumni.upenn.edu/groups/tcpw.

A frequent theme that runs through TCPW programs is the question, *Can you*

In addition to helping women prepare for life after Penn, TCPW has enhanced campus life with grants that sponsor visits from prominent women scholars, help student organizations such as Women in Computer Science, and support programs like the Rape Aggression Defense Course offered by Penn's Division of Public Safety. Women's athletics has also gotten a boost from TCPW, which selects a team to "adopt" each school year and hosts tailgates and dinners for traveling athletes. Associate Athletic



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careers," says Patricia Rose, director of career services at Penn.

TCPW also began a mentoring program that would allow Penn juniors to shadow members at work.

Like other women of her generation, Einiger did not have these kinds of role models. "When I was growing up, we never discussed my career around the dinner table," she says. "What was discussed for me was a *job*—and I came from a very progressive, highly educated, supportive family. My father was a doctor. My mother was College for Women Class of '40. Then she became a fantastic wife and mother.

"I believe she was the first woman permitted to take economics classes at Wharton," Einiger continues. "When I was a child, I remember bragging that my mom had majored in home economics at Penn!"

Einiger gradually found her own way,

have it all? "A lot of women in our group were women in the '70s who had given up family life to have a career," says Judith Roth Berkowitz CW'64, another TCPW founder who succeeded Einiger as chair of the fledgling organization—and joined her in a 20th anniversary serenade to Al Shoemaker at the group's spring conference in April (see sidebar). "I wouldn't say they felt they had made the wrong choice, but I think they felt they had not really thought through what they should do. So we wanted to give our women who were very bright and preparing for great careers an understanding that they *do* have choices ... and to not be disappointed if it didn't all happen at the same time."

"It's a real sign of progress that we've moved beyond the question of whether women can do the work to the question of how they can combine a successful career with a fulfilling personal life," Einiger adds.

Director Mary DiStanislao believes that TCPW's support of Penn women's sports has been mutually beneficial. "It allows some of the alumnae to get involved with a team anew," she says. "And I think for some who didn't have the opportunity or participate [in sports] while they were here, they're getting a taste of it." At the same time, "for the teams it's exciting because they're mining a whole new vein of supporters," she adds.

This past fall TCPW bought the women's track team new warm-up suits. The team captains met with the group to express their gratitude. "Here's a group at the University at the top of their game," DiStanislao says. "Knowing what they were doing in Penn athletics, helping to set the stage for their future lives, I think the alumnae felt a lot of joy and pride."

TCPW has also sparked a greater sense of connection to Penn among its alumnae, according to Berkowitz. "Previously, it was

men who headed up all their reunion classes. And women—their names had been changed if they got married—they weren't even contacted. Now, all of a sudden they sometimes headed up the reunion class," she says. "Now women give a lot of money to the University because they have a real tie."

Berkowitz was the guiding force behind one signature TCPW initiative that fostered such ties—the highly successful Celebration of 125 Years of Women at Penn. In November 2001, 1,200 women came back to campus for

year term as TCPW's chair.

TCPW also has worked to achieve a more diverse membership—in age, race, stage of career, geography—and it continues to offer new programs to meet the needs and interests of Penn women. The group has expanded its career-advice programming to the summer, with events planned in New York, Washington, and Los Angeles.

Undergraduates as well as young alumnae will have the chance to meet with TCPW members to talk about networking and moving from summer jobs to perma-

room. "The importance of TCPW cannot be overstated in terms of the impact they have had on the University," says Hoopes Wampler, assistant vice president of alumni relations. "They represent Penn at its best and are the leaders past, present, and future on which this institution thrives."

"It's my belief that this group is truly greater than the sum of its parts," says incoming chair Marjorie Gordon Schaye CW'75. "It's a team that's unbeatable, and I am beyond thrilled and enormously humbled by the opportunity to be its chair."



events that included the dedication of the Women's Walkway and the Class of 1949 Generational Bridge, panel discussions, and an alumnae book-signing party ["Gazetteer," Jan/Feb 2002]. "They got to meet each other and see how women at Penn had been successful in their careers and lives, and it was an uplifting and eye-opening experience for everybody," Berkowitz says.

More recently, TCPW has lobbied for more child-care options for Penn students and employees—an effort that led to the addition of 56 spaces at Penn Children's Center. "It's something that we think is important as they expand the campus," says Susanna Lachs CW'74 ASC'76, who recently concluded a two-

year term as TCPW's chair. "It's just been an incredible expansion of our mission," Lachs says.

For next fall the group is planning a program on women scientists at Penn. "It's very difficult to manage lab work, grant work, patient work, and advance yourself in the department and raise your family," Lachs says. "The women who have been able to do this and balance everything successfully really want to help us make an impact."

She met with a small group of women scientists at Penn's Abramson Cancer Center to discuss the advancement of women in their field. One of them commented that "just knowing we were going to have this program was so meaningful to her," Lachs says. "The dean stopped by all of us sitting around the table and told me, 'These women never get together in one room. They're always too busy.'"

The organization has already proven the power of getting women together in one

Schaye would like the group to raise more money for grants and continue to place more women in leadership positions at Penn, as well as improve child-care options for faculty, students, and staff. "In terms of gender equity, when you hire a female professor, you've got to be able to offer her the child care if she needs it," Schaye says. She also hopes to make more people aware of the group's presence on campus and to collaborate with the University to "continue to advocate for women and to continue to better the quality of their Penn experience."

While celebrating what they've already accomplished, TCPW members are keeping an eye on the future of the organization. "We as alumnae look at the current students, and they knock our socks off," Schaye says. "We can't wait for these women to be part of TCPW, because they're amazing." ♦

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