

REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON WOMEN IN PHYSIOLOGY*

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Chairperson

Background

In January 1973, Dr. Elizabeth Tidball wrote to Dr. Robert Berne, then President of the American Physiological Society, requesting the establishment of a Committee on Women Physiologists. The idea had developed as a result of occasional meetings by women physiologists to discuss factors related to the education of women and career achievement of women. Regularly participating in these discussions were: Drs. Elizabeth Tidball, Esther Hardenberg, Louise Marshall, Florence Millar, Willie Smith, and Marion Webster.

In response to this suggestion, after some deliberation the Council established a Task Force on Women in Physiology at its meeting in April 1973. A meeting was held in March 1974. A report of the meeting follows.

First I should like to say that I am pleased to have been asked to make a report on the Task Force; more importantly, I am pleased that the Task Force has been busy enough so that I have material on which to base a report at this time!

The Task Force on Women in Physiology was approved by Council at its meeting here a year ago. The membership for the Task Force was approved by Council at the Fall Meetings in Rochester last August, and by December the Task Force was finally constituted. I shall tell you who the members are but first I would like to relate a brief anecdote. Not long ago a male colleague asked me to name the Task Force members. After I did he said, "I never heard of any of the women." This points up one of the difficulties of our women members quite clearly, and one very obvious reason for the need to have such a Task Force. For the women of the Task Force are by no means newcomers to the Society: they have attended meetings regularly, presented papers, published, and voted at business meetings for a collective total of 66 years. But you still don't know who we are! So I shall help remedy that situation right now. The members of the Task Force are:

- Dr. June Barker of the Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine, NYU
- Dr. Virginia Fiske, Professor of Biological Sciences, Wellesley College
- Dr. Elizabeth Gerst, formerly of Columbia University, but currently raising three young sons
- Dr. Florence Millar of the National Cancer Institute
- Dr. Elizabeth Tidball, Professor of Physiology, George Washington University Medical Center, and our erstwhile male member,
- Dr. Ray G. Daggs, retired Executive Secretary-Treasurer of APS

*Presented at the Business Meeting on April 11, 1974 in Atlantic City.

Our first project, already underway, is that of identifying just who women physiologists are. Of some 3988 members of the APS, only 272 are women. Where are the rest of us? In an attempt to find out, we are mailing post card questionnaires to women members of the Zoological Society and the Society of General Physiologists; to women listing themselves as physiologists with the FASEB Placement Service and for the Scientific Manpower Commission's last survey. In addition, everyone who receives The Physiology Teacher and The Physiologist will find a card enclosed in this issue. We would like each of you to help distribute these cards to women who are physiologists but not members of the APS - faculty, graduate students, women physiologists in biology and other departments. We are counting on you to turn up women we would not otherwise be able to find.

You might legitimately wonder what we intend to do with the replies. We have several things in mind. First, quite simply, it is important for many individuals and institutions to have an estimate of the pool size of women physiologists. In the last two weeks alone I have had three telephone requests from Chairmen of physiology departments for this information as they proceed to fulfill their affirmative action responsibilities in recruiting and hiring new staff. The Society needs this information as well. Second, we plan to issue a subsequent questionnaire to the women who reply in order to gain a more complete picture of the activities, interests and accomplishments of women physiologists. We expect that these replies will provide general information for publications on women in the profession as well as specific information about women APS members in order to assist in bringing names of qualified women to the attention of Council.

Another project is the development of a reference file of articles relating to the professional development of women, particularly women scientists. This will help to keep us informed, provide bibliographic materials for our own publications, and serve as a general resource. If, in your reading, you come across an article which you feel would be useful for the Task Force in its work, please send the reference, or a copy of the paper, to me at the APS office. The more of us who participate in this activity, the more informed we will all be, and from time to time we will make available to you some suggested reading materials. Ms. Mary Dittbrenner will circulate abstracts of the articles to the Task Force.

In the immediate future, at the Fall meetings of the APS in Albany, we will be holding a round-table discussion on opportunities and problems relating to women physiologists in teaching and research. Dr. Charles Edwards, a Co-Chairman of the Local Committee, is cooperating with us in this venture. While we do not appear on the preliminary announcement, you will find us listed in the Program. We urge you to come, to ask questions, to make comments, and to interact with us in matters which concern us all.

Finally, there is a Task Force on Women in Physiology, after some four years of gestation and a few sharp birth pains. But we have come into existence, and we see many tasks awaiting our attention. To a very

large measure we believe our success, in terms of service to the Society and to the wider scientific community, will rest on your active support and participation in our projects. We are not a committee exclusively of women or for women; we are, rather, a Task Force of the APS and for the APS. We urge you to join us fully in our efforts, and we look forward to our productive association.

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON INHALED PARTICLES AND VAPORS

The British Occupational Hygiene Society intends to hold a Fourth International Symposium on Inhaled Particles and Vapors in Edinburgh, September 22-26, 1975.

The aim will again be to present the results of the latest research into the inhalation and retention of harmful (or therapeutic) dusts, mists, gases or vapors, the way they are handled by the body, and their effects; emphasis will be on basic mechanisms rather than on case histories or general toxicology.

Further details and copies of Forms are available to interested persons and may be obtained from: Dr. J. Burns, or Mr. J. Dodgson at the British Occupational Hygiene Society, Institute of Occupational Medicine, Roxburgh Place, Edinburgh EH8 9SU, Scotland.