

WOMEN IN THE FEDERAL SERVICE

Another outstanding "first" for a woman came in January of this year when President Eisenhower designated Dr. Hazel K. Stiebeling to receive the highest honor the country can bestow on its career civil servants, the President's Award for Distinguished Federal Civilian Service.

Dr. Stiebeling is Director of the Institute of Home Economics, Agricultural Research Service, Department of Agriculture.

The President, in making the award, cited "her lasting contributions to the science of human nutrition and through this to the health of the American people."

The gold medal awards, given annually to five outstanding individuals, were initiated in 1958. They are awarded on the basis of selections by an Awards Board of which Secretary of Labor James P. Mitchell is Chairman.

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Women constitute 24.2% of the federal Government's entire civilian personnel. In December, 1958 the U. S. Civil Service Commission listed 573,941 women employees of a total 2,366,886 working in the federal service.

Although the majority are engaged in clerical and related work, women are forging ahead at higher levels. Slowly but surely they are winning recognition on the policy-making level and in professional and semi-professional fields. Women in the last two categories have increased noticeably since World War II.

Up-to-date lists of key officials contain women physicists, chemists, business economists, electronics scientists, mathematicians, and astronomers. There is a small but growing number of women doctors, lawyers, nurses, training instructors, engineers, psychologists, social workers, and biological scientists.

On the eve of World War II there were only about 6,000 women in the professional classifications. The number has risen to an estimated 32,600, over 20% of all professional personnel.

Also during World War II, when young men were called into military service, women moved into semi-professional, semi-scientific and semi-technical fields such as claims examiners, medical technicians, cartographic aides, library assistants. So valuable has been their service that they have continued in these positions.

A survey by the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor shows that the Government hires women for jobs ranging from accountant to zoologist.

Only one in six women in the federal service works in Washington, D. C., thus indicating that women have employment opportunities with the federal Government throughout the country.

In addition to women civilian employees, women are welcomed in the four branches of the armed services. They now total 12,075 in the Army; 7,673 in the Navy; 1,910 in the Marines and 10,515 in the Air Force.



Total women in the armed services, coming to 32,173, includes 8,675 nurses and medical specialists.

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The two women trail-blazers in the federal services were Mrs. Elizabeth Cresswell of Charlestown, Maryland and Miss Mary K. Goddard of Baltimore, Maryland, who were appointed postmistresses in 1786. There were slight gains in the years immediately following, after which the Republican Administration of Abraham Lincoln (1861-1865) stepped up the pace. At that time General Francis E. Spinner, U. S. Treasurer, began to hire women in appreciable numbers to alleviate the manpower shortage in the Government during the Civil War period.

Previously women had a struggle to obtain and retain positions of even a minor nature. This was the experience of Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross, who was a clerk-copyist in the Patent Office (1855-57 and 1860-65). It was not until 1870 that the doors to government services were formally opened to women in the federal service.

Gains in the appointment of women were marked after 1912 when a Republican President, William Howard Taft, named Miss Julia Lathrop as the first woman chief of the U. S. Children's Bureau. During the Administrations of Woodrow Wilson, Democrat, the first woman Civil Service Commissioner served briefly. She was Helen H. Gardener.

In the subsequent administrations of Presidents Harding, Coolidge and Hoover, Republicans (1921-33), women scored additional "firsts" - Assistant Attorney General (1921); Chief, U. S. Home Economics Bureau (1923); as Consuls and Vice-Consuls in the Diplomatic Service (1925-1930); Collector of Customs (1925); Superintendent, Women's Federal Prison (1925); Chief, Passport Division, State Department (1928); Judge of U. S. Customs Court (1928); Member, U. S. Board of Tax Appeals (1928); and Assistant Commissioner, U. S. Office of Education (1929).

From 1933-53 during the Administrations of Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman, Democrats, women chalked up additional "firsts" - the first woman in the Cabinet (Secretary of Labor, 1933-45); first women Ministers to foreign countries - Denmark (1933); Norway (1937); Luxembourg (1949); Director of the Mint (1933); Assistant Secretary of the Treasury (1936); Member, Social Security Board (1937); Member, Federal Communications Commission (1948); first woman Ambassador (Denmark, 1949); Treasurer of the United States (1949); and Assistant Secretary of Defense (1950).

IN THE EISENHOWER ADMINISTRATIONS

Several new "firsts" have been won by women since the beginning (1953) of the Administrations of President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Republican. These include:

Mrs. Oveta Culp Hobby, the first woman Administrator of the Social Security Administration, and in that role she was the first woman to carry the ball in creation of a new Cabinet Post - the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. She headed it as its first Secretary, serving from 1953-55.

Miss Bertha S. Adkins, first woman Under-Secretary - that of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, appointed July, 1958.

Mrs. Clare Boothe Luce, the first woman Ambassador to a major country (Italy). She served from 1953-57.

Miss Frances Willis, formerly Ambassador to Switzerland, now Ambassador to Norway, first career woman diplomat elevated to an Ambassador.

Mrs. Katherine G. Howard was the first woman Deputy Civil Defense Administrator (1953-1954), member, National Civil Defense Advisory Council and also permanent alternate U. S. Delegate to the NATO Civil Defense Committee (1954-1957); served as Deputy United States Commissioner General of the Brussels Universal and International Exhibition, 1958.

Mrs. Dorothy McCullough Lee, the first woman to be Chairman of the Subversive Activities Control Board (1956-). Previously, she served as the only woman member of the Board of Parole, Department of Justice (1953-1956) - also a "first."

Mrs. Daphne Leeds, the first woman Assistant Commissioner of Patents. (1953-).

Miss Catherine B. Cleary, the first woman Assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury. (1953-1954).

Mrs. Anne Wheaton, the first woman to serve as Associate Press Secretary to the President. (1957-).

Dr. Beatrice Aitchison, the first woman named Director, Transportation Research, Bureau of Transportation, U. S. Post Office Department. (1953-).

Mrs. Consuelo Northrop Bailey, the first woman to serve as member, Advisory Board, United States Post Office Department. (1953-1954)

Mrs. Alice K. Leopold, the first woman to serve as Assistant to the Secretary of Labor (1958-). (Had served since 1955 as Assistant to Secretary of Labor for Women's Affairs.)

