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Time Buries Women's Lib

"If there is a theme among those coming of age today – and a theme for this issue – it is that gender differences are often better celebrated than suppressed… The feminist label is viewed with disdain and alarm; the name of Gloria Steinam is uttered as an epithet."

With that statement in its lead-off article in its special issue entitled "Women: The Road Ahead," **Time** magazine buried the women's liberation movement which demanded a "gender-free society." We have evolved from the "post-feminist" era, which the **New York Times** proclaimed in the mid-1980s, to the anti-feminist decade of the '90s.

When the feminist movement burst on the American scene in the 1970s, it appeared to be the wave of the future. The new woman seeking male careers instead of family dominated the media and was cruelly condescending to the fulltime homemaker. Feminist Robin Morgan told a Phil Donahue audience in 1983, "We are becoming the men we once wanted to marry."

But 20 years in a woman's life make a crucial difference. That is illustrated by TV newswoman Connie Chung announcing that she is abandoning the fast track at CBS-TV in a list-ditch drive for motherhood at age 44.

Less than two years ago, the media gave extravagant coverage to feminist outrage at the very suggestion of a "Mommy track," which allows career women to trim their careers to accommodate raising their babies, and of "sequencing," which means raising children first and seeking a career only after that. **Time** now respectfully describes these as "options" seriously entertained by bright young college women.

Time quotes a college senior as saying, "I'm not willing to have children and put them in daycare. I've babysat for years and taken kids to daycare centers. They just hang on my legs and cry. I can't do that."

Time's national survey just conducted by Yankelovich found that today's young women age 18 to 24 are more family oriented than career oriented. In choosing which of the following is your "single most important goal," only 27% said a

successful career, while 39% said a happy marriage and 23% said well-adjusted children, making a total of 62% who are primarily family oriented.

What about the attitudes of women who are currently in the paid labor force? **Time** reports a Gallup poll which shows that only 13% of employed mothers want to work full time, although 52% of them currently do so. They don't like the fact that the "total contact time" between parents and children has dropped 40% over the past 25 years.

Again, **Time** illustrates this factor with a personal comment. A Los Angeles public relations executive and mother of an 8-month-old said, "I see her only an hour in the morning and an hour in the evening. I don't have a single friend who has worked full time who doesn't regret how little time she's spent with her children."

Isn't that exactly what First Lady Barbara Bush told the Wellesley College graduates at their commencement – which threw the feminist into nationwide tantrum?

For the last five years, we've heard **ad nauseam** that "the days of Ozzie and Harriet are gone forever… they've been replaced by the two-earner couple who put their kids in daycare." That's another feminist myth which **Time**'s special issue dashes on the rocks of reality.

Time includes an interesting article by author Sylvia Ann Hewlett, who describes what happened to family income when millions of wives moved from the home into the workplace in the mid-1970s. Alas, the two-earner couples don't make any more real income than the "Ozzie and Harriet" couples made 25 years ago.

A typical 30-year-old man buying a median priced home in 1973 made monthly mortgage payments equal to 21% of him income. In 1987 it cost this young husband 40% of his income to do this, and on top of that, he must pay massively higher taxes.

Between 1955 and 1973, the median wage of men rose from $15,056 to $24,621. When wives flooded into the workforce, the male wage (adjusted for inflation) declined 19% down to $19,859.

This is the same phenomenon that happened in Sweden a decade earlier. When social legislation induced all wives into the labor force, there was a temporary "bubble" when households with two wages appeared to have a higher income; but

when wages and prices readjusted, and the combined labor of the two spouses working 80-hour week barely gives them the standard of living that their parents had when the breadwinner worked 40 hours a week and his wife was a fulltime homemaker.