

CAREER INFLUENCES FOR WOMEN  
IN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

by

CATHERINE LOUISE ACUNA

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ABSTRACT

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Catherine Louise Acuna, MLA

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Supervising Professor: Gary O. Robinette

This research explores the insights of successful women who are pioneering the practice of landscape architecture in today's practice. Their perspectives regarding the impediments and advantages of women in current practice are examined within the public, private and academic practices of landscape architecture. Also examined are methods that are being used to overcome limitations, as well as advantages utilized in each area of practice.

Finally, critical counsel and perspectives of the future of the profession are directed toward future generations of women in landscape architecture who aspire to follow in their path.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This document identifies the factors that influence the careers of women in landscape architecture. It examines the perspectives of successful, practicing, women landscape architects in the public, private and academic practices. Insights into personal careers as well as general insights into women in the profession are explored.

#### 1.1 Research Objective

The objective of this research is to identify the factors that have influenced the careers of currently successful women landscape architects and those of their peers. This research is a self-examination and critique by women in the profession, of women in the profession. There have been a limited number of published studies that have established geographic data of women in the profession of landscape architecture and an increasing number of studies documenting the work of individual, historical female landscape architects. However, there has been little qualitative data focused on the individual and collective attributes that have contributed to the rise of women within the profession.

#### 1.2 Research Questions

The principles questions explored in this research are:

1. What impediments do women face in the public/private/academic practice of landscape architecture?

2. What methods do women employ to overcome these impediments?
3. What advantages do women have in the public/private/academic practice of landscape architecture?
4. What inspires or influences women to succeed in the public/private/academic practice of landscape architecture?
5. What steps, methods or pathways do women employ to advance their careers in the public/private/academic practice of landscape architecture?
6. What perceptions do women have of current career opportunities in the public/private/academic practice of landscape architecture?
7. What perceptions do women have of future career opportunities in the public/private/academic practice of landscape architecture?
8. What advice would benefit the careers of future generations of women in the public/private/academic practice of landscape architecture?

### 1.3 Definition of Terms

The following terms are found within this thesis and are defined to fit the context of this study:

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act.

ASLA: The American Society of Landscape Architects.

Critical Mass: The point of accumulation that could result in sudden and overwhelming change; for example, the point at which the number of women in the profession could result in a change in the profession itself.

Key Informants: the most prominent, informed and influential people in an organization or field of practice.

Paradigm Shift: a fundamental change in approach or assumptions; acceptance by a majority of a changed belief, attitude, or way of doing things.

Perspective: A point of view. The relationship of the aspects of a subject to each other and to a whole; for example the point of view of women in practice to themselves and to the practice in general.

Respondent: interviewee; synonymous with Key Informant.

Success: The achievement of a desired or attempted goal; the attainment of a highly respected position or status.

#### 1.4 Limitations

The limitations of this study are conditions beyond the researcher's control. Several key informants contacted for interviews responded but opted not to participate due to time constraints in their schedule or scheduling conflicts due to international travel for projects and sabbaticals. Several other key informants simply did not respond to the requests for interviews. As a result, the results of this research may be limited due to the relatively small sample size. A few of the interviews were conducted with quick efficiency due to time constraints, but most were open, objective discussions. Opinions and attitudes of others may differ from those of the participating informants. These factors may restrict the generalizations offered in the study's results.

### 1.5 Delimitations

The scope of the study was delimited in two ways. First, all of the informants are practicing women landscape architects who have achieved renown in their field through innovation and leadership. They all have specific knowledge and experience that pertains to this study. They have nothing to gain either financially or professionally from the expression of their attitudes and opinions in this study and therefore, can remain wholly objective.

Second, the interview subjects within this work are limited to those whose practice is based within the United States to limit variations in international cultural issues that are not explored in this study.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Feminist Theory in Landscape Architecture

Linda Nochlin launched the feminist critique of modernist art history in 1971 by asking the question, “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?” (Nochlin 1988). This simple question served as a catalyst for intellectual probing and internal questioning into not only art history, but also other adjacent disciplines. Nochlin called for a feminist paradigm for art history that would affect a new understanding of art, enlarge the scope of intellectual inquiry, and revitalize the discipline (Schenker 1994).

Another important question was presented by Griselda Pollock in her book, *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art*: “Is adding woman to art history the same as producing feminist art history?” (Pollock 1988). Heath Massey Schenker in her article, “Feminist Interventions in the Histories of Landscape Architecture”, rephrased this question to ask, “Is adding women to the history of landscape design the same as producing feminist history?” (Schenker 1994). Heath states that as a discipline landscape architects are becoming more conscious of the need to examine the role of women in the history of landscape design. In doing so, we enlarge and enrich our reading of history, stimulate critical dialogue regarding the dominant paradigms used for writing the history of landscape design, enlarge our understanding of the complex history of landscape design and the placement of the

modern profession of landscape architecture in that history (Schenker 1994). However, the history of landscape is a social history. The role of individual designers is configured and limited by complex social, political, environmental, and cultural factors (Schenker 1994). In the years since Nochlin first posed her question the answers have become more complex, the commentary more high-flown, and a preface to probing turf (Kay 1993).

The feminist movement in the 1970's coincided with the environmental movement and affirmative action. A body of laws that have a substantial effect on the profession of landscape architecture were also passed during this era: The Environmental Policy Act, The Water Pollution Control Act, The Toxic Substances Control Act, the Endangered Species Act and the Coastal Zone Management Act. Women began to question their position within the profession of landscape architecture as a result of the self-examination that occurred during this era. Many questions that emerged are still leading questions today (McPeck 1995).

## 2.2 Conferences and Symposia

At least one key conference or symposium on issues of gender in design and landscape architecture has been held each decade since the nineteen-seventies. A brief review of these conferences and excerpts from relevant presentations are explored.

Michigan State University hosted the symposium, *Landscapes and Gardens: Women Who Made a Difference*, in June 1987 to shed some light on the historic role of women in European and American landscape architecture (Rutz 1988). This two-day, international symposium brought together approximately seventy speakers and

participants who spoke of an eclectic collection of women who have influenced the fields of landscape design and landscape architecture. The opening presentation by John W. Simpson, ASLA, focused on the contributions of Rachel Carson whose landmark book, *Silent Spring*, is credited with touching off the new environmental movement in the United States during the nineteen sixties and seventies (Rutz 1988). This examination of the potential environmental repercussions of rampant pesticide use is still considered a cornerstone of the environmental movement today.

Several lectures focused on the accomplishments of women who were inspired by the writings and works of Gertrude Jekyll. Natalie Alper, ASLA, reviewed the life and work of Florence Bell Robinson who, although a prolific writer, gained renown for her book, *Planting Design*, which was the first textbook specifically written on this topic and was the result of the inspired writings of Ms. Jekyll (Rutz 1988). This text was widely used throughout the United States and abroad as the academic standard for courses in planting design for many years. Daniel W. Krall, ASLA, presented his research on the public works of Beatrix Farrand, Ellen Shipman, Marjorie Sewell Cautley and Helen Bullard. Krall stated that “as the profession was being established, women emerged as practitioners in a society which frowned upon females entering all professions except teaching and nursing” (Rutz 1988).

Women in the political arena were also recognized for their role in developing the profession by bringing about political change for the protection of natural beauty and the environment. Betty Frankel, writer for the *Detroit Free Press*, discussed the work of Lady Bird Johnson, who is credited with instigating the *National Conference*

*on Natural Beauty* that brought together representatives from every state to discuss beautification and conservation (Rutz 1988). Ms. Johnson also founded the National Wildflower Research Center in Austin, Texas that today is considered one of the leading centers of research and education on native plants and natural landscapes. Christiana Ziegler, professor of landscape planning at the University of Dortmund in Germany, discussed the work of Hannelore Schmidt, wife of Helmut Schmidt, German Chancellor from 1974 to 1983, who used her political connections to further the protection of native plants in Germany. She also explored the academic career of landscape architect, Herta Hammerbacher, who was the first female German professor in garden and landscape design at the Technical University of Berlin (Rutz 1988).

The next decade was distinguished by the conference, *Women, Land, Design*, in 1993 to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Radcliffe Seminars and “to celebrate women’s influence on the land”, according to director Nancy Downey (Kay 1993). The seminar offered an array of presentations that aimed to recover, recognize and encourage the work of women in landscape architecture (Furlong 1994).

Kristin Hill addressed women’s way of relating and how that relates to environmental policy in her lecture, “Gender, Moral Voices and the Making of Environmental Policy.” Hill draws on Carol Gilligan’s findings that in moral reasoning men use principles of fairness, whereas women emphasize inclusion and relatedness, seeking win-win situations (Furlong 1994). She concludes that the environmental debates to change environmental policy do not need more science or data; they need more women in government. “Making the best decisions requires an ability to truly see

a range of options, and to the extent that women can reframe some of the questions asked in environmental policy, they accomplish that crucial task” (Furlong 1994).

Deborah Dalton also addressed women’s way of relating in her presentation, “Coordinating Art in the Landscape: The Influence of Women on the Landscape as Curators and Public Art Administrators.” The field of public art administrators is estimated to be seventy-five percent women. Dalton suggests that the reason for this domination is that the role of the administrator is to keep lines of communication open among many players, to perform a balancing act between advocating for the artist and advocating for the needs of the public and their agencies (Furlong 1994). It is also a relatively new field with no established structure or hierarchy and requires creative problem solving skills, patience, flexibility, multitasking and the ability to compromise on alternatives (Furlong 1994).

Suzanne Spencer-Wood spoke of women’s domestic reform at the turn of the twentieth century and urban designs created by women’s organizations and gardening clubs. She credits their work with “shaping urban landscapes by instigating the development of city plans and by creating parks, playgrounds, and other green spaces” (Furlong 1994). These new urban spaces combined several aspects of both the public and domestic realms thus blurring their distinction and creating new domesticated public spaces.

The next conference, *Gendered Landscapes: An Interdisciplinary Exploration of Past Place and Space*, convened at Penn State University in 1999. This interdisciplinary conference brought together scholars working from a variety of

perspectives who share an interest in gender, history and landscape. The conference aimed to establish new standards for communication across disciplinary borders and to engage a widely interpreted discussion regarding the cultural meanings of the spaces in which we have lived and worked (Dennis 2000).

James Loewen's lecture, "Must a Hero Be a He? How Historic Markers and Monuments Treat Women, Men and Gender," examined the omission of women from public history on highway markers across the American countryside. Loewen reasons that most markers were erected during the early part of this century and this writing of history into the public landscape reflected the marginalization of women both within the discipline of history and within the ideology of the voluntary groups supporting these projects (Dennis 2000). He concludes that the public history currently inscribed on the public landscape is in need of much revision.

*Groundwork: The Annual Meeting of the Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture*, conference at the State University of New York in 2002, revealed that the body of knowledge in landscape architecture is still broadly influenced by the theories and methodologies of several varying disciplines and professions, including architecture, planning, ecology, history, anthropology, sociology, and psychology (Musacchio 2003). Conference sessions compared and contrasted traditional and emerging questions regarding research, pedagogy, and service activities and explored their importance in the advancement of knowledge in academia and practice (Musacchio 2003).

Three separate panel discussions examined the profession in further detail. “School Grounds: The State of Landscape Architecture Education in 2002,” addressed the challenges faced by landscape architecture programs at a time when resources are decreasing and program enrollments are increasing. Also discussed were inconsistent standards in the preparation of graduates and the low ratio of graduates to future retirees in the profession (Mussacchio 2003).

The second panel discussion, “Landscape Architecture Practice is Changing: How Should Education Respond?” questioned whether the current educational and professional structure serves the diversity of needs in the profession. Three scenarios for the future arose from the discussion: (1) Continuation of, (2) Refinement of, or (3) Transformation of, learning outcomes and core knowledge (Mussacchio 2003).

The third panel, “Cities of Resilience: Integrating Ecology into Urban Design, Planning, Policy and Management,” discussed how collaborative research in urban ecology and landscape change could potentially redefine some areas of core knowledge in landscape architecture and planning (Mussacchio 2003).

## 2.3 Current Issues and Research

### *2.3.1 The Family Factor*

Few national studies have been conducted regarding issues of conflicting career and family demands in landscape architecture. The most recent study, conducted by Joan Iverson Nassauer in 1985, surveyed practicing women landscape architects and the relation of the family experience to their career patterns.

During the years following World War II, there were few women practicing in the profession. However, by the nineteen-seventies some academic programs in landscape architecture had nearly equal numbers of male and female students indicative of the change in societal attitudes towards two-income families and men's participation in family life (Nassauer 1985). Birth rates have declined since the nineteen-sixties and couples are having their first child at a later age (Nassauer 1985).

The changing composition of the family implicates a changing agenda for career decisions. Career decisions may be affected by a partner's career choices. Relocation may become more difficult at the same time that career or job changes become more possible. Flexible work hours and personal leaves may become more important to employees at the same time that high salary levels become relatively less important (Nassauer 1985).

The data for this study were stratified by marital, parental and age characteristics. Younger and older women are likely to have different career patterns due to the different social environments at the time decisions regarding family and careers were made. Older women are more likely to make a career move contingent on a spouse's career than are younger married women (Figure 1).

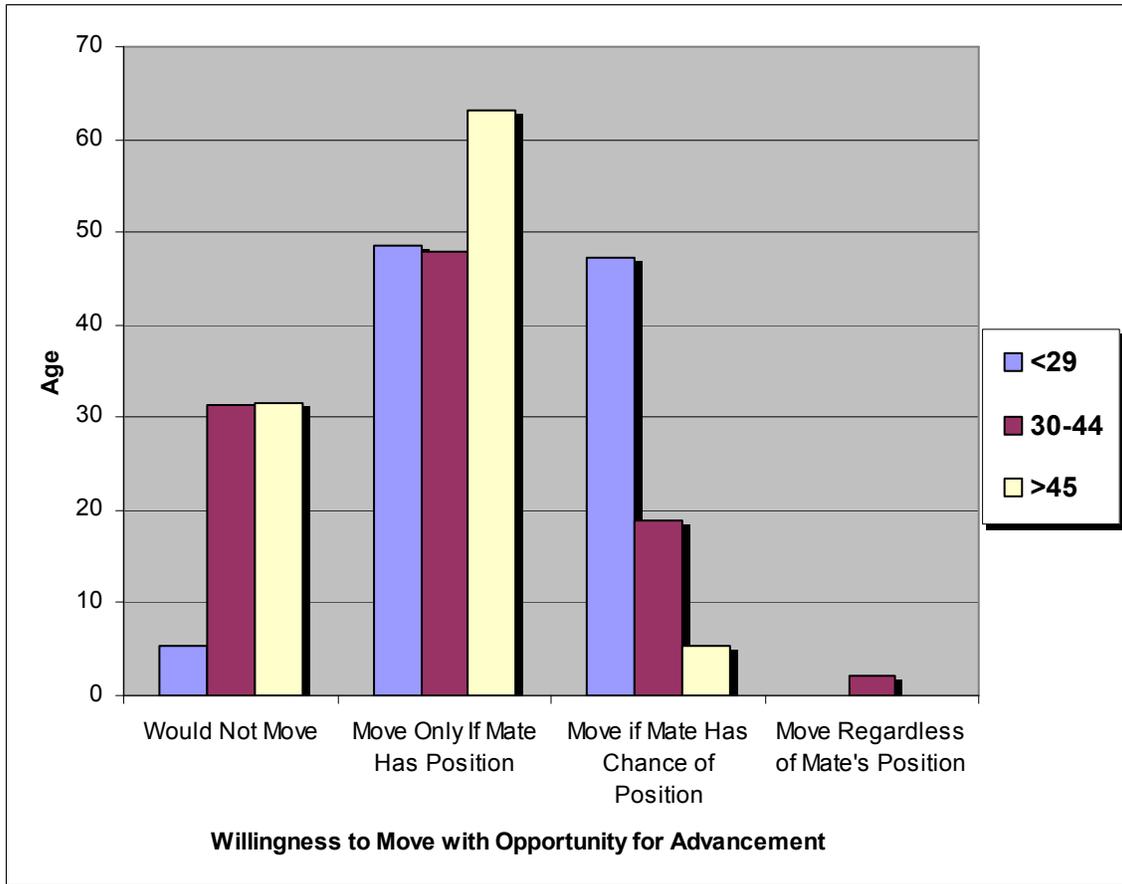


Figure 1. Married women's willingness to relocate (Nassauer 1985).

Parental status, rather than age, was related to part-time employment (Figure 2). Full-time practice often does not offer the flexibility in schedule and benefits that would support parents in full-time employment. While maternity leave, flexible working hours and sick leave are available to roughly sixty percent of those surveyed, very few have provisions for day care or child care allowances (Nassauer 1985). Parental status was found to have a temporary effect on women's achievements in salary and management responsibilities. Income levels of women, ages thirty to forty-four with preschool children, are considerably lower than those of their non-married and non-

parent peers. Married women in the same age range also supervise fewer individuals than their non-married and non-parent peers. Parenting responsibilities and inflexible work options may cause many of these women to be underemployed (Nassauer 1985).

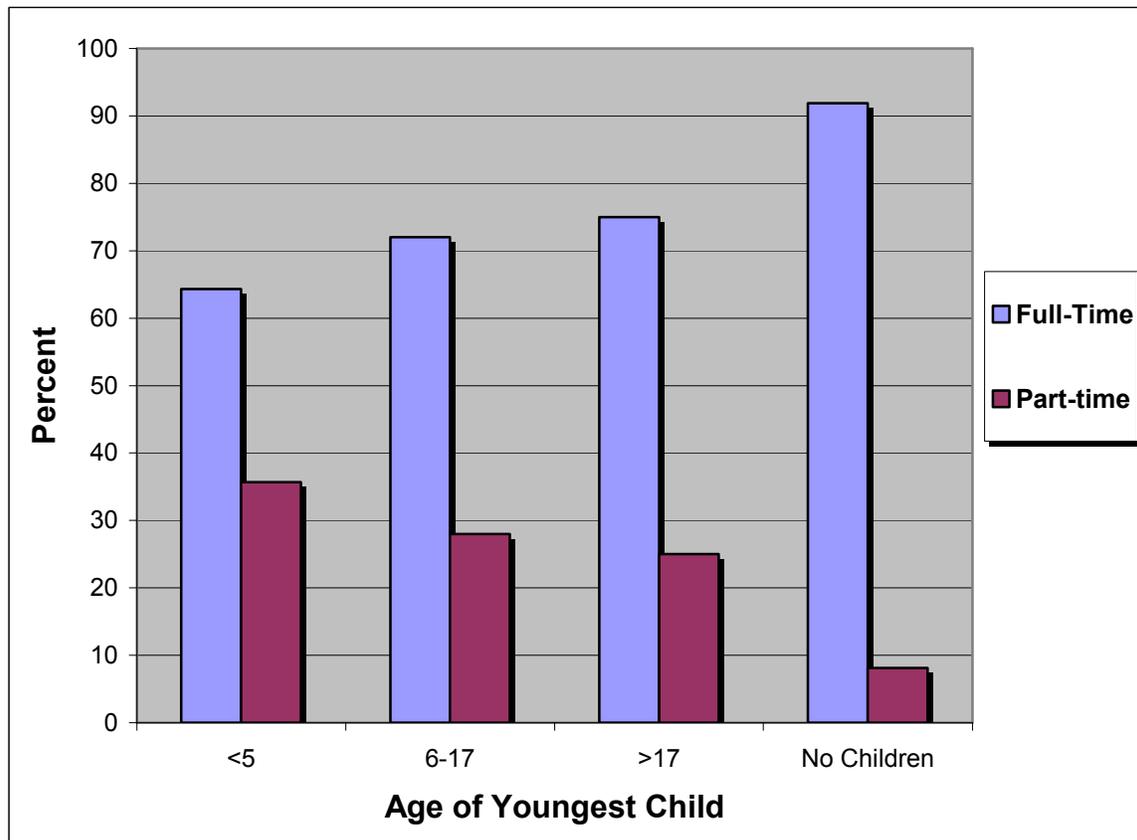


Figure 2. Parental status by employment status (Nassauer 1985).

Married women who are not parents have incomes and career accomplishments similar to those of their never married peers. This effect diminishes when children are older, but gauging the long-term effect of parenting deserves more study.

Nassauer concludes that the careers of women landscape architects and the competing demands of career and family may play a part in younger women's choices

to delay family commitments. She also concludes that in the short term, parenthood may impinge on career achievements (Nassauer 1985).

Questions that arise as a result of this study need to be addressed. Would traditional office practices change if women younger than thirty-five in senior positions that do not have children, begin to become parents in large numbers? Would the status of these women be compromised if they changed their schedule? Will women landscape architects choose not to have children? (Nassauer 1985).

As women constitute an increasingly higher proportion of young landscape architects and as more men are members of two-income families, changes in business practices to benefit people with children will benefit the profession (Nassauer 1985).

### *2.3.2 Academic Practice*

During the formative years of the profession of landscape architecture, few educational opportunities were available for women. Most early women in the profession studied landscape gardening or devised an individual course of study themselves. To counter this inequity, Judith Motley Law established the Lowthorpe School of Landscaping, Gardening and Horticulture for Women in 1901 on her estate in Massachusetts. Jane Bowne Haines founded the Pennsylvania School of Horticulture for Women in 1910, followed by the establishment of The Cambridge School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture for Women in 1915 by Henry Atherton Frost (Furlong 1994).

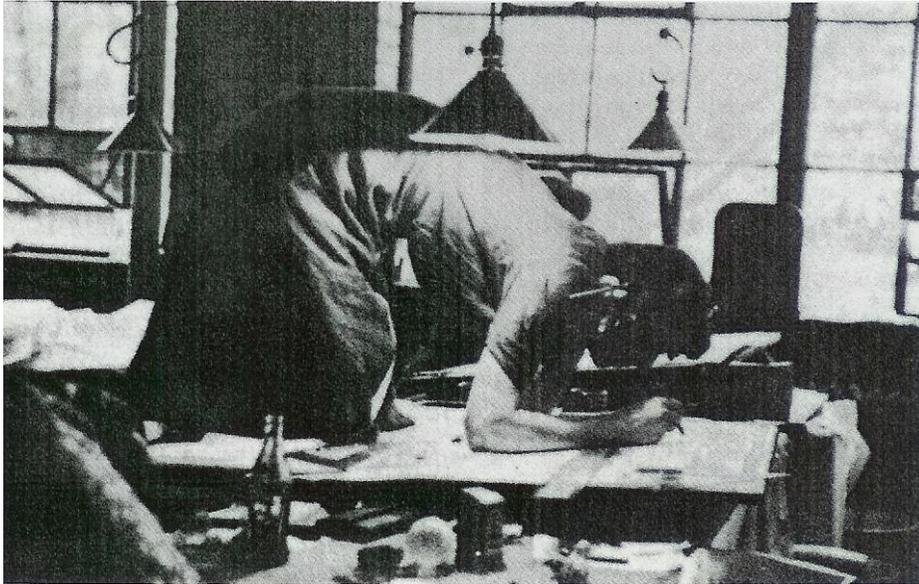


Figure 3. A student of the Cambridge School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture addresses a drafting problem (Furlong 1994).

By the nineteen-sixties, opportunities for women began to expand and a new generation of graduates began questioning the status quo of the profession. In 1972, an American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) study by Darwina Neal regarding women's status within the profession was published. This study concluded that more women were needed in the academic realm to teach landscape architecture (McPeck 1995). The Council of Education in Landscape Architecture (CELA) study compiled by Miriam Easton Rutz in 1975, found that although 350 women taught landscape architecture across the country, only nine were teaching full-time at the graduate level. By 1991, however, the ratio had shifted generously to reveal ninety-eight women of 425 faculty positions in accredited undergraduate and graduate programs (McPeck 1995).

A study of women in academic leadership in Australia, published in 1995, demonstrated that the academic careers of men and women follow different pathways. Men are more mobile and gain promotion through their ability to change institutions. Women typically have less mobility with family, relationships, child-bearing and rearing. Many women stayed in the same institution for many years (Chesterman 1995). Women also start their academic careers later in life, sometimes after child-rearing or as a second career.

Women also have a tendency to be more cautious in their career choices, undervalue their credentials or think they are unprepared for senior positions. Women often wait until they feel they are perfectly qualified to apply for an advanced position rather than gamble on the unknown (Chesterman 1995). There is also a complacency phenomenon in which women reach a particular level of advancement and move into lateral positions rather than vertical positions. Some hesitancy occurs for women to apply for positions that no woman has ever held. However, change is occurring and women are gaining strength of purpose. They are beginning to value their varied, less traditional career paths and are starting to highlight the importance of collaboration and consultations that position them to become change agents for academic institutions (Chesterman 1995)

The theory of ‘critical mass’, which is viewed as numerical equality, has been found to be less important in promoting change in academic institutions than the level of appointment and power that women exercise. These positions have greater visibility and influence to make the greatest impact. A more positive image is promoted and can

result in a cultural change within the institution that may encourage other women to apply. Gender balanced institutions enjoy a more ‘normal mix’ of individuals that enables a more cooperative and collegial form of management and allows women to attain and retain senior positions in significant numbers (Chesterman 1995).

As more women assume academic positions of authority, the focus on possibilities for professional training for women increases. Anne Whiston Spirn began a collaborative program for Harvard University with the Boston Urban Gardeners and the West Philadelphia District to develop community gardens as a way to influence the character of women’s education by combining academic research with studio work (McPeck 1995). Others are applying a more theoretical, eco-feminist approach to the ethical, social and cultural dimensions of the landscape. More women are entering into the profession with scientific backgrounds, resulting in development in environmental areas and bridging the gap between physical and cultural landscapes. Women have the opportunity to find their own level of expertise and expression as the profession becomes more specialized, influencing women’s relationship to the profession and the profession to the environment (McPeck 1995).

Many women faculty are conducting their academic and private practice pursuits simultaneously. Lolly Tai, ASLA, notes that working on projects outside of the university helps her to maintain a current body of knowledge that translates into the effectiveness of her teaching. “It’s a completely different way of learning – a combination of textbook learning and hands-on experience” (Mays 2000). Dean Cardasis, ASLA, confirms this ideal as the two forms of professional activity form a

symbiosis. “It is critical to make them so, to search for ways to have your professional work become part of the intellectual discourse of the profession and to have that discourse become a part of your built exploration” (Mays 2000). Cardasis also implicates the importance of peer-reviewed excellence in both activities to validate the merits of a professor’s scholarly research and professional work. He also cautions that the merits of learning from professionals with private practice experience should not be overlooked in academics as more landscape architecture programs aim to hire Ph.D.s in an effort to improve their academic status and content (Mays 2000).

Internal and external critics of landscape architecture have identified the level and amount of research being done by educators and practitioners as a major impediment to the furthering of the profession. (Milburn and Brown 2003). The profession of landscape architecture had a publication performance in 1992 of 0.48 articles published per faculty member per year, in relation to twenty-two other disciplines (Figure 3).

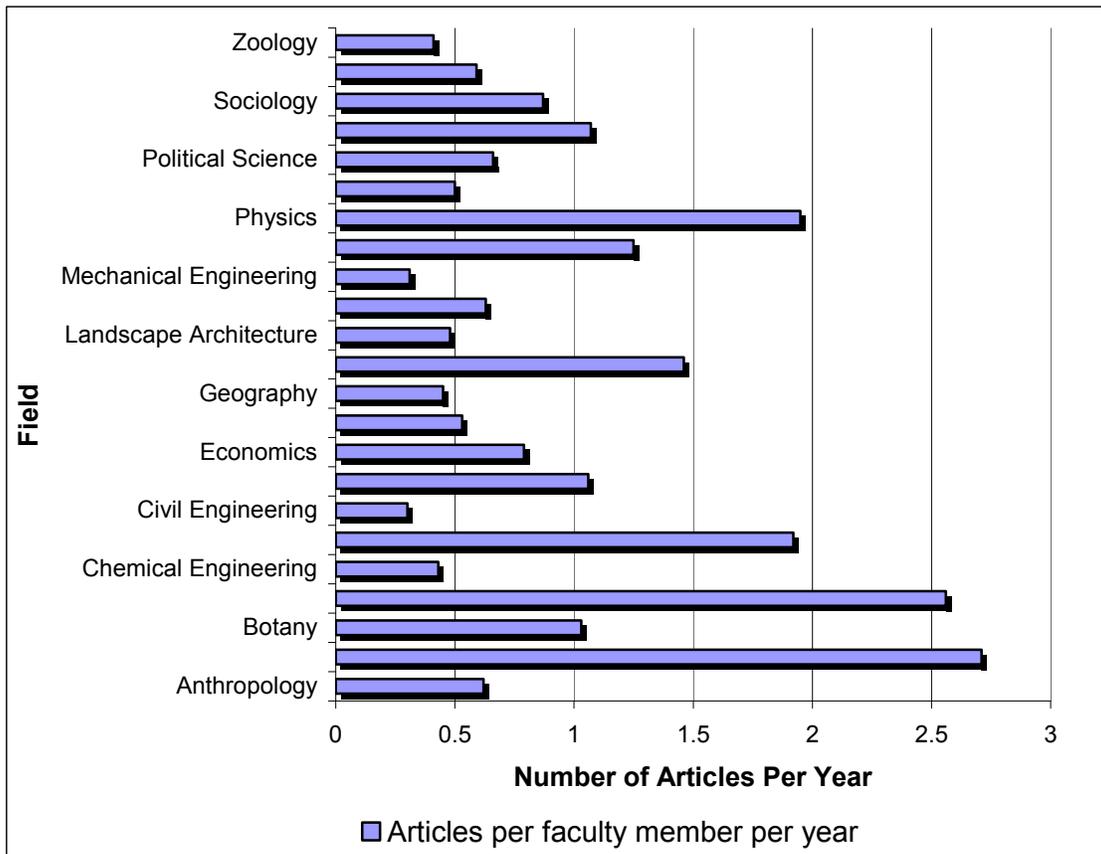


Figure 4. Variation in publication performance for twenty-two disciplines (Milburn and Brown 2003).

Milburn and Brown discovered that age, level of education and institutional support have a much larger impact on research productivity than gender, as determined by articles published and number of presentations. There was found to be a negative relationship between age and research productivity and a positive relationship between level of education and research productivity. This may be due to different expectations on junior faculty by department heads and the requirements of the tenure process (Milburn and Brown 2003).

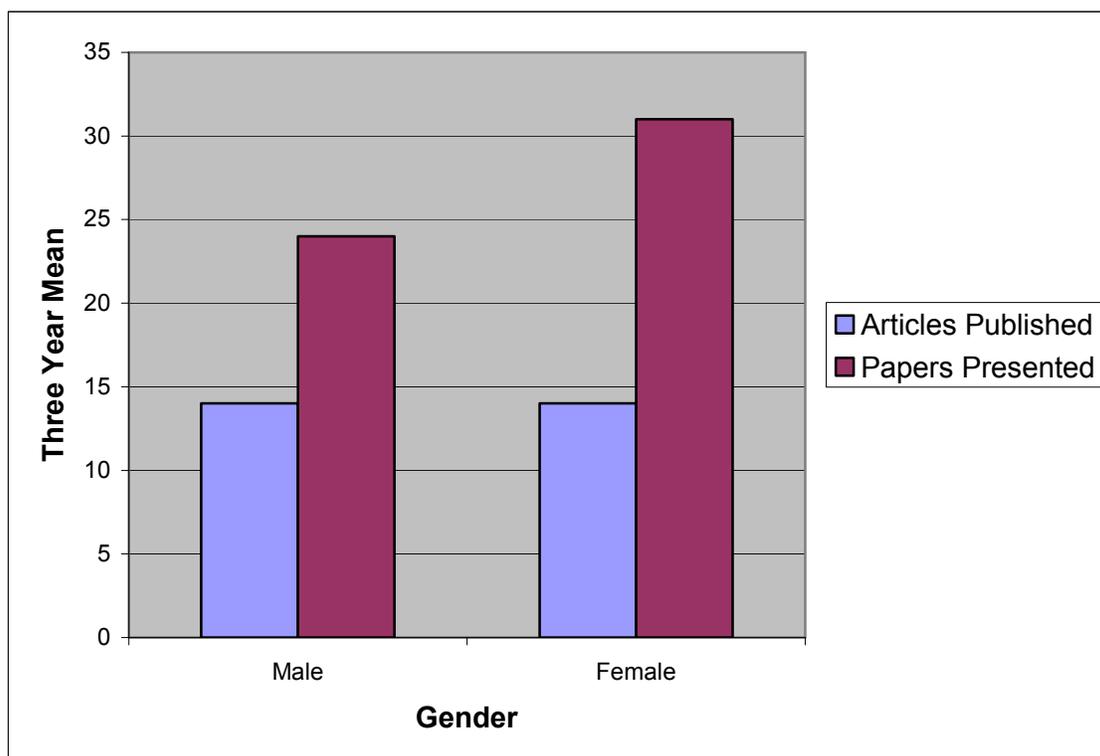


Figure 5. Relationship between gender and research productivity over a three year period (Milburn and Brown 2003).

While the number of research articles published by each gender is relatively equal, women present a higher number of papers at refereed conferences (Figure 5).

The study suggests that the experience of the researcher and their innate ability increases their research productivity and that acquiring the habits of sustained and high research output early often lead to consistently high productivity throughout an academic career. Recommendations for increasing the output of all educators include reducing the volume of administrative responsibilities, providing a positive and energetic environment in which quality research and sustained productivity are the

norm, facilitating child care provisions as much as possible and facilitating participation in organized research units or collaborative groups (Milburn and Brown 2003).

### *2.3.3 Public Practice*

Women's entrance into the public or civic arena in the United States can be traced back to the women's club movement that began around 1853 for the purposes of village improvement (Szczygiel 2003). Contemporary accounts consider Laurel Hill Association of Springfield, Massachusetts, the first woman's club formed. This club planted nearly four thousand trees, successfully lobbied a railroad company to improve the depot grounds and building, installed water fountains on public streets, paved sidewalks, cleaned streets and developed small parks, all within the first forty years of its' inception. Numerous clubs had formed by 1892 and became instrumental in the city beautiful movement that swept through the country at the turn of the century (Szczygiel 2003).

The Depression years marked a period of regression for all landscape architects. Projects offered as a result of the New Deal and the Civilian Conservation Corps were not generally offered to women, although a few were employed by the Resettlement Administration planning experimental and subsistence housing projects. Women also found work in government-sponsored projects. Maud Sargent, landscape architect for the Borough of Manhattan, designed Carl Schurz Park and East River Drive Park during this period. Others engaged in public works, urban projects, as well as planning, for State Garden and Food Conservation projects (Mcpeck 1995).

World War II was an equally lean period for women in the profession, but new opportunities were offered in the growing field of Army camp and military base design and camouflage design (McPeck 1995).

Today, women in landscape architecture continue this commitment to public service through public-sector practice at the federal, state and local levels. Many women choose public sector practice for the management experience, job flexibility and scope that would be difficult to achieve in the private sector (Fleming 1995). The public sector offers more immediate freedom, responsibilities, opportunities to strengthen individual skills and develop professional confidence in a shorter time frame than in the private sector. Opportunities to develop teamwork skills also abound as projects involve a large number of decision makers, including community groups, steering committees and various local, state and federal agencies (Fleming 1995).

Public sector positions offer opportunities for schedule flexibility such as flex-time, computer networking and telecommuting to a greater extent than is available in the private sector (Fleming 1995). These opportunities offer a greater degree of job flexibility and network support for working mothers.

There are opportunities developing in what are considered to be semi-public entities that are independent cooperatives between governmental entities, universities and public initiatives. These organizations offer cutting-edge opportunities for landscape architects within the public sector. One such organization is the Hackensack Meadowlands Development Commission. Katy Weidel, ASLA, states, “it’s about the creative uses of our sanitary landfills, preserving the delicate balance of nature while

affording people open-space opportunities”. The Hackensack Commission does most of their design work in-house and has its own budget without state appropriations. This arrangement offers job flexibility for self-motivated and product-oriented individuals. However, upward advancement within similar operations may be stagnant or nonexistent except for the usual step salary raises (Fleming 1995).

At the national level, the role of landscape architects in the National Park System is shifting as the operations of the System undergo a dramatic transformation (Carr 2000). The business of managing national parks is changing rapidly, and many factors are contributing to the emergence of new theory and practice in national park design and management. In light of continuing federal budget cuts parks are implementing new planning initiatives, funding sources and partnerships to create opportunities for the development and redevelopment of visitor centers, transportation and other park support systems (Carr 2000).

The Denver Design Service Center, the agency’s central planning and design office, has been reduced in size and is now looking to consultants to provide up to ninety percent of design services for line item construction projects. The reduction of in-house planning and design staff will decrease the agency’s capacity to provide professional design services. The Denver office will continue to provide planning, predesign and project management services to help assure consistency in the quality of new park construction. According to Linda Moery, ASLA, Chief of Planning and Design Services at the Denver office, the role of in-house landscape architects is shifting away from the production of final contract documents to assuring that projects

get started on a sound conceptual basis. Project management has become more important as managers become the link between consultants and the traditions and expectations of working within the country's most scenic and historically significant landscapes (Carr 2000).



Figure 6. Rivers and Trails Project to restore the natural habitat of Indian Creek in Caldwell, Idaho. Collaborative effort between U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and various organizations (Benson and Stone 2006).

Despite this outlook, landscape architects are finding new pathways into civic service at the federal level. Those with ecological backgrounds are moving into positions such as Resource Managers, Refuge Managers, Planners and Environmental Specialists, where the necessary skills parallel those of landscape architects. Opportunities are also being found in partnerships between federal entities and community outreach programs, such as the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program. This program is a partnership between the Park Service and ASLA to provide pro bono planning and design assistance to selected community projects dealing with rivers and trails (Benson and Stone 2006). Program

staff, which include landscape architects, pull together government agencies, nonprofit organizations, landowners and citizens to form coalitions and identify funding sources. Local ASLA chapter volunteer pro bono services for design charrettes and planning meetings. Once the groundwork has been completed, landscape architects may find opportunities to propose additional work for fees on these projects (Benson and Stone 2006).

#### *2.3.4 Private Practice*

The most successful asset to a private design firm is that of reputation. The inestimable value of reputation for service, good design, fairness, and accuracy determines the success of the firm (Martin 2000). Private firms also develop their own cultures and philosophical values. For women in private practice, these factors contribute toward the trend in self-employment and firm ownership.

Women are starting to recognize and exploit the expanded nature of landscape architecture. Women's entrance into the profession began with estate planning and garden design, as evidenced by published historical literature on the careers of Beatrix Jones Farrand and other early pioneers (Madsen and Furlong 1994). However, recent forays into environmental design, ecology and sustainability have encouraged women to explore and specialize in other areas of the profession.

As a result of affirmative action and the feminist movement of the 1970's, women-owned businesses became eligible for preference on governmental contracts through an application process and designation as a 'Women-Owned Business'. This designation opened the doors for many small firms like Alley & Abey of Mill Valley,

California. This firm began with a specialization in public park design and was very lucrative until the economic decline of the 1990's. Utilizing contacts from previous projects and the preferred designation status, the firm invested in the latest technology available and expanded the scope of their project base. This exploration led to new lucrative contracts with the Navy for neighborhood development plans on bases and transportation projects with Cal-Trans (California Department of Transportation). The firm also diversified the ethnic balance of the office to increase their presence on teams with allied fields, such as architecture, that need to meet minority-firm hiring requirements during contract negotiations.

Other firms are expanding abroad and establishing international satellite offices. This international business approach offers unique challenges and rewards. Stabilization of the firm's finances is one of the biggest advantages. The firm has the flexibility to shift projects and staff on a wide basis to allow the firm the time to ride out large economic fluctuations in each country. It also allows for greater exposure to design innovations and developments and cultural awareness. The greatest challenge for these firms is the ability to do high-quality work that's responsive to local culture, economy and environment (Riley 1994b). There is also the challenge of communication with firms and officials in foreign languages, especially in regards to the technical aspects of design. Many firms hire local, multi-lingual staff to accommodate this challenge (Riley 1994b).

Becca Hanson, ASLA, of Portico Group of Seattle, notes that her firm was set up to be a computer-literate studio to utilize technology for the benefit of the firm. The

instantaneous nature of information transfer has allowed her staff to remain current on all projects at a moments notice. The firm also uses these tools to stay appraised of the latest knowledge base of the profession and specialized fields. They have a librarian on staff to continually update their database and research technical information for specialized projects. Although Hanson indicates that she has encountered gender barriers when competing for projects, she feels that often issues, such as personality and communication problems, often masquerade as gender issues (Riley 1994b).

Well-known, women landscape architects, such as Kathryn Gustafson and Martha Schwartz, are using the power of publication to promote the visibility of their own work and that of women in the profession to the world.

#### 2.4 Professional Organizations

Documenting the history of female membership in the American Society of Landscape Architects is one method of understanding the current status of women in landscape architecture and the direction women in the Society may take in the future. A descriptive analysis of female membership and leadership participation within the Society for the period of 1899 to 1995 was undertaken by Valorie Henningan and Jot D. Carpenter in 1998 (Henningan and Carpenter 1998).

The membership roster of women started with the founding of the Society in 1899 with one female member, Beatrix Jones Farrand. Elizabeth Bullard joined the roster later in 1899. These two women remained the only female members until 1907 when the number of women began a steady increase, with minor variations, which

continues today. By the end of the 1995 membership year, 2,329 (23%) of the 9,971 members of ASLA were women (Figure 7).

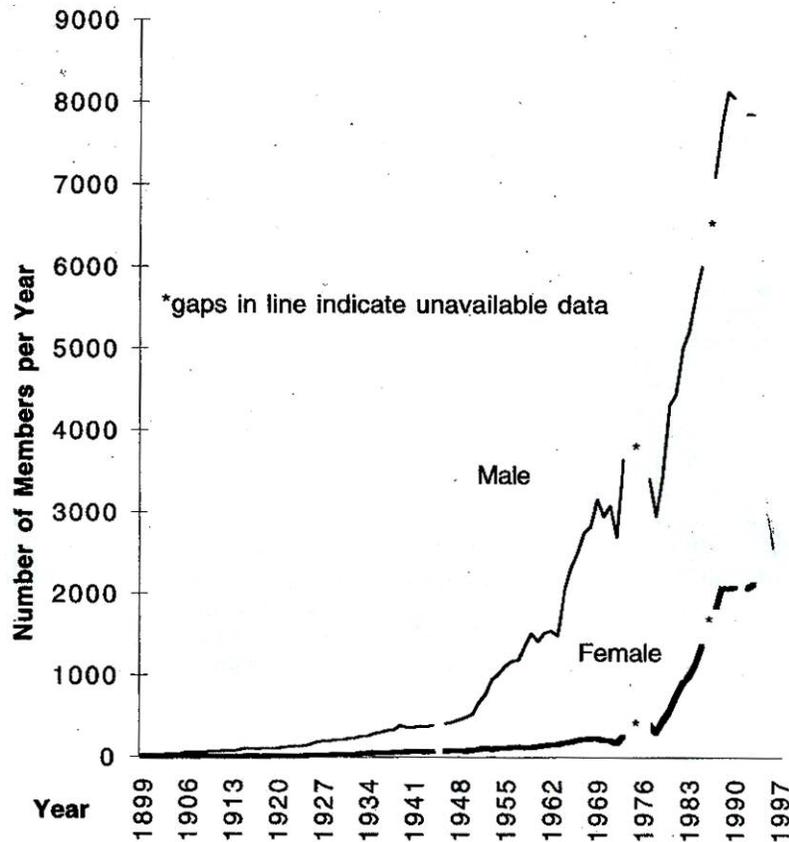


Figure 7. Annual membership of ASLA from 1899 to 1995 by gender. Data is missing for the years 1945, 1974, 1976, 1986, 1991 and 1994 (Gaps in data correspond to missing data)(Nassauer 1998).

The rate at which women have joined ASLA has generally reflected the male membership. However, since 1990, the number of female members has continued to increase while the male membership has slightly declined. This phenomenon is also reflected in the number of men and women enrolled in accredited landscape architecture

programs. If this enrollment and membership trend continues, female members and students will become increasingly important to the future of the ASLA (Hennigan and Carpenter 1998).

Women have been involved in the society since its inception in 1899. They were primarily involved in committee work and in chapter business affairs until 1931 when V. Ethelwyn Harison became the first women chapter secretary. This entrance into chapter governance was followed by the 1938 election of Katherine Bashford, who became the first woman chapter president. Women continued this momentum into the governing structure until in 1979, Darwina Neal was the first woman elected as President of the Society. Five other women have been elected to the position of President since then (Hennigan and Carpenter 1998).

Women are currently present at all levels of the local and national governing structures of the Society. There are three levels of leadership in the ASLA structure. The first level is chapter appointment to committees and task forces; the second level is election to chapter officer or service on a national committee, task force or council; and the third level is service to the Board of Trustees and the potential for advancement to the national office structure of the Society.

Over the past ninety-five years and until 1990, the number of women inducted as Fellows annually has been between zero and three individuals (Figure 8)(Hennigan and Carpenter 1998). However, since that time, the number of women inducted annually as Fellows has risen. In 2005, nine women were inducted as Fellows.

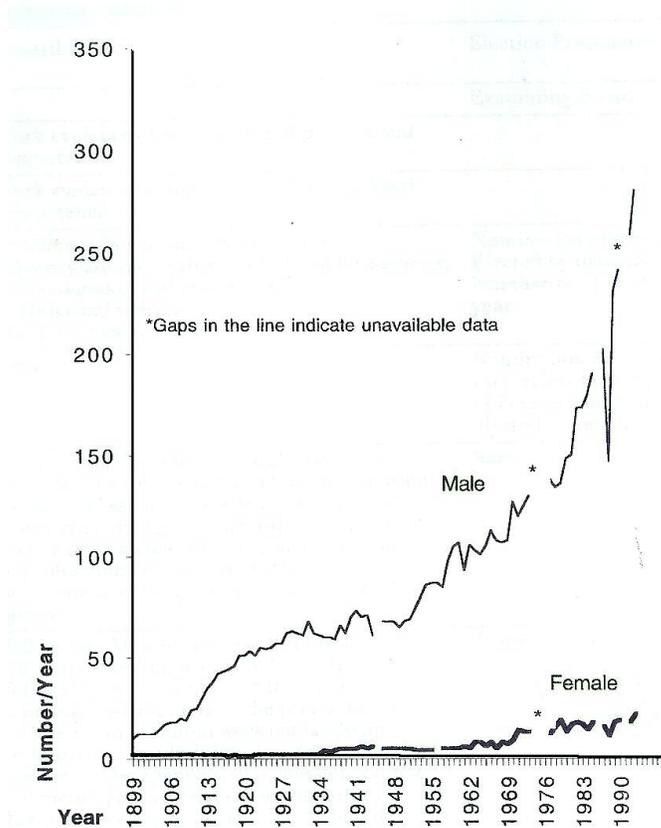


Figure 8. Annual living Fellows of ASLA from 1899 to 1995 by gender, as reported in the membership rosters. Data is Missing for the years 1945, 1974, 1976, 1986, 1991 and 1994 (Gaps in data correspond to missing data)(Nassauer 1998).

### 2.5 Role of Women in the Profession

Women, specifically women in landscape architecture, are engaging in a war of changing perceptions. The profession is seeing an unprecedented increase in the number of women entering into the profession (Dwyer 1984).

The vision of women in the profession is a complex collage, but one element that will bring focus to this vision is that of critical writing. This area is considered by some to be the largest void in landscape architecture. Critical evaluation in the form of

questions, comparisons and critique will provide focus and guidance for the future of the profession (Dwyer 1984). The profession must engage in the performance of landscape architecture, not merely the practice of it. However, criticism should not imply chastisement. The profession must be open and willing to self-evaluation and develop an understanding of the findings. Women are in a critical posture to affect their role within the profession and possibly direct the profession into new positive directions (Dwyer 1984).

Current women leaders within the profession are opening doors for future leaders. Women need to continue to assume leadership roles, develop effective communication tools and foster mentorships to advance not only their presence within the profession, but also the presence of the profession as a whole.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODS

#### 3.1 Introduction

The qualitative approach to research is uniquely suited to uncovering the unexpected and exploring new avenues (Marshall and Rossman 1995). There have been a limited number of published studies that have established the geographic data of women in the profession but there has been little qualitative data focused on the individual or collective attributes that have contributed to the rise of women within the profession.

#### 3.2 Research Design

The qualitative approach of standardized open-ended interviewing of key informants was the data collection process utilized for this research. This format allows for immediate follow-up and clarification (Marshall and Rossman 1995). The standardized open-ended interview consists of a set of questions carefully worded and arranged for the purpose of taking each respondent through the same sequence and asking each respondent the same questions with essentially the same words (Patton 1987). This approach makes sure that the basic issues are covered, but it permits new data specific to each interviewee to emerge. The purpose is not to limit or control the content of the responses, but to maintain a focus for the interview, and a guide for the interviewer (Hopman 1998).

The interview questions are written in advance and are asked during the interview process exactly as they were written. The questions are designed to be as open-ended as possible, allowing for as much breadth as possible in the interviewees responses. Open-ended questions have the potential to gather richer, more informative data than would be possible with close-ended questions (Patton 1987). Therefore, questions that could be answered with a definitive yes or no answer are avoided to prevent limitation of interviewee responses.

### 3.3 Key Informants

Key informants are individuals with first-hand knowledge of the topic of research and are considered to be well-informed, influential and prominent members of a community or organization. Key informants (sometimes referred to as ‘elites’) often contribute insight and meaning to the interview process because they are intelligent and quick thinking people, at home in the realm of ideas, policies, and generalizations (Marshall and Rossman 1995). For this study, key informant interview subjects were selected from references in the literature, as well as inquiries to leaders in the profession who they considered key informants to be. Fifteen key informants were contacted via e-mail and telephone and asked to participate in this study. Eight informants chose to participate by agreeing to be interviewed.

The respondents for this study are prominent individuals within the public, private and academic practices of landscape architecture and have achieved positions of leadership and status within their area of practice.

The overall goal of the interview is to understand the factors these key informants identify as career influences for women in the public, private and academic practices of landscape architecture, to learn their opinions, and to capture the complexities of their individual perceptions (Patton 1987).

The objectives of the interviews are:

1. Ask each interviewee to identify impediments to women in the profession;
2. Ask each interviewee to identify advantages for women in the profession;
3. To discover methods that women use to overcome impediments in the profession;
4. To discover methods that women use to promote their careers in the profession;
5. To determine the perceptions of current and future career opportunities for women in the profession;
6. To discover attributes that will enable women to succeed within the profession in the future.

Due to logistical limitations, all interviews were conducted over the telephone.

Detailed notes were taken during the course of the interviews and developed in further detail following the interviews to ensure accuracy. The transcribed interview questions and responses are included in Appendix A and B, respectively, of this document.

The interviews took place between November and December of 2005. The interview subjects were chosen for one or more of the following reasons:

- Prominence as an author in relevant literature;

- Position within a design firm;
- Prominence as a practitioner;
- Position within an academic institution that offers an accredited program in landscape architecture;
- Position within a governmental institution;
- Position within a relevant professional society or organization;
- Willingness to participate in this study;
- Knowledge, experience and understanding of the subject matter and issues explored in this study.

Brief descriptions of the nine interview subjects listed below are in the chronological order in which the interviews occurred. All interviewees were guaranteed complete anonymity as a condition of their acceptance to participate in the interview process. It was believed that anonymity would allow the interviewees to be more open and objective with their answers.

Respondent #1 is a manager within a federal governmental agency of the United States and is responsible for the management and planning of over three million acres of varied landscapes and wildlife. Her background includes natural resources, landscape ecology and public policy in addition to landscape architecture. Her plans have won numerous awards by the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) and other major organizations.

Respondent #2 owns a private design firm in the Midwest United States. She experienced both the public and private sectors of landscape architecture prior to

starting her own firm. She has held multiple senior offices within the ASLA on the local, state and national levels. She promotes landscape preservation and the building of partnerships with governmental agencies and allied organizations.

Respondent #3 is a Dean at a large university in the southern United States. She held various senior positions in academia prior to becoming Dean and has received numerous honors and awards for her work. She has also held multiple senior offices within the ASLA on the local, state and national levels. Her current focus is the formation of innovative centers for research, restoration and the development of new technologies in collaboration between academic and governmental institutions.

Respondent #4 owns a private design firm in the eastern United States that serves a national and international clientele. She travels extensively to serve as a panelist, jurist and commentator on issues in landscape design and has presented papers at numerous international conferences. She is recognized internationally for innovation in natural and urban environments with a focus on sustainability.

Respondent #5 is a Professor Emerita of a large university in the western United States and currently serves as a principal in a private design firm in the western United States. She is recognized for her research on the psychological and sociological aspects of architecture, land-use planning and landscape design. She is particularly concerned with urban open space and the therapeutic benefits of gardens.

Respondent #6 owns a private design firm in the western United States. Her practice focuses on the use of cultural demographics to design healing gardens for hospitals and

business clients. She is widely published and has received numerous awards for landscape design and public art.

Respondent #7 owns a private design firm in the northeastern United States. She is recognized internationally for innovative and sustainable urban design projects. Her design projects focus on urban parks, public spaces that include university campuses, and green roofs in urban environments. She is the recipient of many awards and has authored numerous books.

Respondent #8 is a Chief within a federal governmental agency of the United States and is responsible for the management, planning and preservation of federal cultural resources in the eastern United States. She has held multiple senior offices within the ASLA on the local, state and national levels. She is recognized for her extensive research on the historical cultural resources of the United States and for her landmark studies for the ASLA.

## CHAPTER 4

### INTERVIEW RESULTS

#### 4.1 Introduction

As previously stated, the overall goal of the interview is to understand the factors these key informants identify as career influences for women in the public, private and academic practices of landscape architecture, to learn their opinions, and to capture the complexities of their individual perceptions (Patton, 1987, p. 118). The questions were open-ended and made no attempt to lead the respondents toward particular answers.

#### 4.2 Academic Practice

##### *4.2.1 Career Impediments and Advantages*

One respondent stated, “The biggest impediment for a career in academics is a lack of good writing skills.” While this is not limited specifically to women or to landscape architecture, it is a skill not being promoted in most academic programs in landscape architecture. The lack of writing skills is an impediment for designers in academia. “Design awards don’t count as much as published works in tenure reviews. This issue is especially pertinent to professors who teach design studios.” This issue is compounded when tenure review committees are composed of individuals from various disciplines unfamiliar with the design process. The lack of published works puts faculty

members of the design fields at a disadvantage in the tenure process and may hinder their promotion.

However, this same respondent also remarked, “Academics in landscape architecture have improved over the last two decades . . . there are many women in academics now and there is nothing in particular that is an impediment . . . women are achieving tenure.”

In contrast, another respondent stated, “The number one impediment is a general problem for women in academics, and that is the tenure track for women into leadership roles. There is a conflict between the academic tenure clock and the biological clock.” The requirements of those seeking tenure are quite high and women often do not pursue tenure track positions due to conflicting family demands. “The demands of the required service work, publishing and teaching conflict with family responsibilities.” Women that do pursue academic positions often drop out of academics when they have a family.

Another issue is that of the counseling role that women faculty members tend to assume. “Women on the landscape architecture faculty are often perceived by students as being easier to talk to, so they tend to take on a counseling role.” This role is in addition to the mentoring role that is implicit in an academic position. While the nurturing role may come naturally to women, it places an additional demand on women faculty members.

“There are generation gaps in academics in landscape architecture.” One respondent identified these generations as, “Senior male leaders, intermediate faculty

and beginning faculty.” There is some contention between the generations as there is a generation of faculty that is nearing retirement and looking to the beginning faculty, especially the women faculty, to fulfill the counseling role for the students. This counseling role is more akin to the women faculty than the male faculty.

There are ‘superwomen’ who are attempting to balance the demands of academia and family, but are finding the balance difficult to obtain. There is a high level of ‘burn-out’ as the fatigue and stress of the conflicting demands takes a toll on the individual. “Most of these superwomen have very cooperative and understanding husbands. Usually their husbands are not in academia or are in non-tenure track positions.”

Universities are inherently collaborative organizations. “Women are collaborative. They operate as a tribe . . . women work in teams and are interested in the group as a whole. This is good for the profession of landscape architecture.” Women possess the necessary teamwork skills required to excel within the governing structure of a university system and to develop the interdisciplinary interests of a university.

Women also have an advantage in social/human research studies due to the public perception that women are more aware of human relationships and are more adept at social analysis. People are more likely to defer to a woman in a social research study. “Women are designers with a social consciousness and a sense of community design. They have a sensitivity toward ADA issues and the elderly.”

#### *4.2.2 Career Advancement and Overcoming Impediments*

Some universities are responding to the conflicting demands of family and tenure track positions for women faculty members through policy changes. These changes include “lengthening the tenure clock or suspending the tenure clock for time to have children, one year, for example.” While many universities have recommended such changes, few have committed them into policy or implemented the changes. “It is a tiny step, but it is a step in the right direction.” Due to the size, complexity and traditions of university systems, they are slow to change. As more women attain faculty positions there may be a stronger push in the future for changes to the status quo of the tenure system.

There are various ways that women advance their careers within academia. Landscape architecture programs have tended to promote women more often than other professional programs. “There are more women leaders in landscape architecture academics than in other design fields, as department chairs, deans or provost.” However, one respondent stated, “Women must work twice as hard as men, especially in parallel positions, to get tenure and respect.”

“Women are pioneering new avenues in landscape architecture.” Women are starting to use the visibility and impact of the academic profession to move into governmental positions. This academic-government connection has created the opportunity for the development of ‘centers of learning,’ which are organizations that utilize interdisciplinary collaborations between universities and governmental agencies, or private interests, to design and plan community oriented projects.

The visibility of literature and research by women scholars is becoming more prevalent. Women are gaining respect in the field through publishing critical works and lecturing on important issues. More women are also entering into the dual roles of operating a private practice and teaching in non-tenure faculty positions.

Academia is the perfect venue for women students to pursue questions regarding the profession. Direction and guidance by professors may inspire students into a career path. One respondent noted that she was encouraged to develop her Master's thesis into a course for the landscape architecture program and later published her work as a book. This eventually led to her obtaining tenure at the university. This exercise in critical writing turned a possible academic impediment into a focused career opportunity and expanded the knowledge of the profession in her field of interest.

One respondent recently retired from academia and did not comment on these issues.

#### *4.2.3 Influences and Inspirations for Success*

“Women teach to impact the next generation of the profession.” Women enjoy the learning process and sharing the knowledge that they have gained with their students. The ability to conduct research, promote the profession, and have an impact on the quality of life through the development of students without having to worry about profit margins serve as both an attraction and an inspiration to women in academia.

Women are also inspired by “senior women in the profession who share the same values.” This inspiration often leads to a particular direction in the profession and

often enables individuals to gain renown in an area of expertise. One respondent stated that this directive inspired her “to do some good in this world.”

#### *4.2.4 Current and Future Career Opportunities*

The majority of new students entering into landscape architecture programs are women. Universities are actively seeking women applicants to fill faculty positions, however the current number of women in the applicant pool is very small. As more women graduate and become active in the profession the pool will increase in numbers. As stated previously, landscape architecture programs tend to promote women more often than other professional programs. There is an increasing number of opportunities for women at the faculty level and in senior positions as department chairs, deans and provosts and the number is likely to increase in the future. Interdisciplinary research and collaborative projects are also creating new avenues and opportunities within the field of landscape architecture.

However, this perception is not universal among women in the profession. “Women in landscape architecture see limited opportunity in academics due to the tenure track. Academics are a mystery and opportunities are unknown by most.” The unpleasant reputation of the tenure process and the time demands on faculty make recruitment of women for faculty positions difficult. Favorable changes to the tenure process and the promotion of those changes will be instrumental to the recruitment and retention of women in academia.

There is also a need for increased communication by faculty with students regarding their research, publications and collaborative projects to make them more

aware of the opportunities that are available in academics. “Women are creating entrepreneurs. They are using academics as the perfect venue to create new centers, positions and opportunities.” Students will benefit from the new career paths and mentoring opportunities that are created but the knowledge of these innovations must be dispersed to be effective.

There are two trends developing for the future of academic practice in landscape architecture. “The first trend is toward having more Ph.D.’s in the faculty line.” While this may increase the stature of a program, it is contingent on “more current students seeking advanced degrees to be eligible for these positions in the future.”

The second trend is toward recruiting more faculty members into non-tenure track, or Professor in Practice, positions. These positions tend to be more attractive to women as they are non-publishing, non-research positions that have fewer conflicts with their personal lives. However, more women are entering into leadership roles in academia and leading departments and schools as deans and provosts. Non-tenure track positions limit the opportunity for advancement.

“Women will dominate academics in the next fifteen to twenty years.” Although there are an increasing number of women leaders in private practice, the positions with the most influence on the future of the profession are in academia and in government. The academic practice of landscape architecture is dynamic and will have an immeasurable impact as more avenues are explored.

#### *4.2.5 Critical Elements for the Success of Future Women in Academic Practice*

Women need to familiarize themselves with the academic process and the opportunities available. Most information regarding university opportunities is not very visible, so various avenues need to be explored to become involved in a university. “It will be important for women in academia to pass this information on to other women.”

“Women also need to pursue advanced degrees as the doctorate level will be required for most tenure track positions within the next twenty years.”

Domestic and international travel is an important factor to developing a broader understanding of culture and applications of design. This exposure may lead to a change in perspective or career focus for the individual. Travel during undergraduate studies or before graduate school is especially encouraged for students as it matures their focus and dedication to their chosen field of interest. Cultural exposure and professional experience in a private design firm also broaden the perspective of those who plan to teach in the future.

The works and histories of famous designers should be studied in greater detail. “Listen to famous designers, even if you do not like them or their work. Study their presentation styles, their philosophy, how they present themselves and their work, their designs and graphic styles.”

Women need to become versed and well read in the profession and related disciplines. There are many specialty areas of practice undergoing tremendous growth, especially in sustainability and ecology. Maintaining a current knowledge of these advancements not only leads to an individual becoming highly qualified in a field of

interest, but also may lead to the development of a “unique approach or agenda that gives an edge or brings a new angle” to that area.

### 4.3 Public Practice

#### *4.3.1 Career Impediments and Advantages*

One respondent articulated that the current demographics of the national agencies of the United States are the main impediment to women in the public practice of landscape architecture, and that the national agencies are “comprised mostly of white males.” These demographics affect the training and advancement for women into management positions. “Training is generally based on a masculine business model.” Women are more easily accepted in staff positions than in line management roles. Women in positions of authority must “find new techniques to accomplish the same objectives as a male would.” This same respondent stated that among the men and women that do work in these agencies, the dominant temperaments are those that follow the traditional approach, “we’ve always done it that way,” and the science-based approach.

In contrast, a separate respondent indicated that she did not encounter any impediments to advancement within her seven-year career in the public sector. This respondent advanced quickly to a senior position within three years and did not experience any resistance to her promotion within the agency. Although she had heard that other women experienced problems, she did not encounter any herself. The problems eluded to were not elaborated on. Another respondent indicated that most impediments are based on individual circumstances or problems.

Public agencies still maintain a level of uncertainty about the proper role and function of landscape architects. “Most government design projects are being contracted out now. Quality of design is being lost because of this.” Private contractors are often insensitive to the historical nature and significance of parks and there is a need for people inside the government to establish design guidelines for contractors. One respondent stated, “The federal government will spend less money on design in the future so there will be fewer jobs in the future, even as demand is growing. The Park Service cannot fill jobs once they have been vacated.”

There is limited professional support and networking as “there are many different professions represented and possibly only one individual from each profession.” General training is offered to professionals within the agencies, but is often too general and “does not address the needs of landscape architects.”

Mobility may be an issue for career advancement and professional development for many women. “Women must assess and plan for these priorities in the phases of their life. Their accomplishments may challenge the priorities of their personal and professional lives.”

One advantage for women in public practice is the standardized salaries for governmental positions. The federal government “has the same pay scale for all employees and the openness of salary information evens the pay differential. There is little negotiation on salaries due to these standards.” Although the government tends to have higher starting salaries than some private design firms offer, the long-term increases are less than in private firms.

“Women in general have better people skills. Women must be cooperative to create a win-win situation.” Communication skills are as important or even more important in public practice than skills in the field of landscape architecture itself. Personality traits must be taken into consideration when developing communication and public speaking skills.

#### *4.3.2 Career Advancement and Overcoming Impediments*

The Committee on Women in Landscape Architecture held workshops in the nineteen-seventies titled, *Dynamics in Numeric Minorities*. “These workshops depersonalized impediments by demonstrating that the dynamics of the demographics were a bigger impediment than gender itself.” These workshops enabled a fresh perspective in women toward their professional frustrations and “opened the road to success.”

Networking among peers, utilization of a mentor, and involvement with professional organizations and interest groups, particularly the Committee on Women in Landscape Architecture, were cited as major factors in overcoming career impediments. These peer groups “identify with each other’s goals, frustrations and abilities.” Continual professional training gained from workshops specifically geared toward landscape architects was stated as being equally important.

“Public practice design services are all interdisciplinary. Landscape architects must take an interdisciplinary approach to use their individual talents along with architects, engineers, et cetera.”

Women seeking to move into management positions have to make decisions regarding the timing and location of this move. One respondent stated that women should “go where the need is, not where they are comfortable.” This may be accomplished by staying within the same agency or location or by transferring to a new location or agency.

#### *4.3.3 Influences and Inspirations for Success*

One respondent stated, “Salary is not the main driver for landscape architects in public agencies. The resource itself, the natural environment, is the main influence.” The natural environment is a source of spiritual nourishment for women in public practice.

Another respondent stated, “Due to the field of practice and the types of people that become landscape architects, the inspirations are the same, regardless of whether they are in public or private practice.”

#### *4.3.4 Current and Future Career Opportunities*

There will be many opportunities for women in the public agencies within the next five to ten years. The current demographics of the Federal Government indicate that “there are a substantial number of employees less than five years from retirement.” There is a need to train people to replace these individuals. If not, “there will be a resulting drain of knowledge and experience within the public agencies.” Many opportunities may soon become available for women to move into these agencies.

However, management of government agencies currently utilizes a business model that is not optimal for the natural resource agencies. For example, monetary

expenses are strictly accounted for, whereas the status of natural resources themselves is not. “These resources have monetary advantages and value that are often overlooked.” Future approaches to the management of natural resources may affect the opportunities within the public agencies, either positively or negatively. “There is a need for people who think outside the box. People should be hired because of their differences, not in spite of them.” The general public wants to be involved and informed about what happens to their public lands and natural resources. Landscape Architects are uniquely suited to be in positions that coordinate with the public. “Society needs concepts that work,” and landscape architects, especially women landscape architects, are adept at knowing how to talk to people. Women are generally raised to be good hostesses, and this skill serves to their advantage in public positions.

State and municipal governments generally offer more opportunities for landscape architects as they have greater access to a variety of funding sources for public projects. Women may have an advantage in acquiring these positions due to their minority employment status.

One respondent noted that the perception of career opportunities vary with the individual. What one person sees as an impediment to their career another may seize it as an opportunity.

#### *4.3.5 Critical Elements for the Success of Future Women in Public Practice*

“Most federal government positions have very specialized experience requirements.” College transcripts are critical as well as course descriptions, which are used to clarify the experience levels of applicants. Women interested in pursuing a

career in a public agency need to have a contact inside the agency that can guide them in their career path. Early preparation is important. Required courses, skills and experience should be obtained while still in college, if at all possible. Additional courses are easier to take as an undergraduate than post-graduate. “Federal Agencies do not list jobs specifically for landscape architects. There are many jobs that function as landscape architects, but have different titles, such as Natural Resource Specialist.” Position descriptions are more reliable than position titles.

#### 4.4 Private Practice

##### *4.4.1 Career Impediments and Advantages*

Most of the respondents implicated that there are no current impediments to women in the private practice, although there have been issues in the past. However, many respondents mentioned that some women may be hindered during their childbearing years due to some employer’s reluctance to hire women who want to have children. One respondent observed that some firms are accommodating to family demands while others are not. A few of these respondents indicated that although they had heard that some women have had problems with this issue, they did not know of anyone who had.

There also seems to be a lingering public perception or lack of confidence in women handling projects. Although this perception is gradually changing, respondents noted that change is not happening fast enough. One respondent remarked, “Women have a lack of access to education, funds, mentors and advancement opportunities in general,” thus attributing this perception to a function of society’s social expectations

and raising of females rather than the gender itself. In this respect, this respondent does not acknowledge any advantages for women in the profession.

In contrast, a separate respondent indicated that the most concrete advantage to women in the profession is the designation of ‘minority or women-owned business,’ which allows for preference on governmental contracts. “Women can also be recruited to be part of a team with a male-owned firm to expand their diversity,” as an advantage in competing for contracts.

During the construction phase of projects, women tend to be treated with a natural courtesy and politeness by construction workers. This courtesy allows for greater cooperation when corrections need to be made in the field. This is more apparent with residential developers than large corporate developers and may vary with the comfort level or bias of the woman landscape architect. “It’s a question of ability versus comfort level.”

Women are generally more attuned to the needs, uses and preferences of the ‘user’ in spaces. “Women are more aware of the time, reasons and uses of people in spaces. Women are more interactive in spaces with other users as they are generally the ones in charge of others.” Women generally lead groups of children on social or educational outings, and are caretakers of those with ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) issues. One respondent remarked that the needs of mothers with strollers are an ADA issue that needs to be addressed and that women are more attuned to this specific, yet common, need. Because of this awareness, the resulting design is more aligned with the user’s needs.

Women, especially working mothers, are adept at multi-tasking and negotiating. This ability allows women to move easily between projects, a beneficial skill in private firms.

#### *4.4.2 Career Advancement and Overcoming Impediments*

Because some respondents have not experienced any impediments in their careers, they are not aware of any specific tools that women use to overcome impediments. Hard work, quality product and good communication skills are attributes that these respondents identify as the formula for advancement and success in their careers. The definition of success from these respondents varied widely. Definitions included: the attainment of a certain position, personal fulfillment, achievement of a client's goals and fulfillment of a client's needs.

The utilization of mentors is described as a relatively new but effective tool for women coming into the profession. Students often use professors as mentors at the undergraduate and graduate levels while new graduates use apprenticeships as a method to obtain professional mentors.

Other respondents stated that being very capable in the profession, knowledgeable about projects, maintaining flexibility and being personable are important factors for women in developing relationships with clients. Attaining a comfort level with public speaking and being aware of the intricacies of different personality types to gauge reactions during potentially hostile situations and how to dismantle them are important negotiation skills.

Self-employment is a major pathway to career advancement for women in the profession. This arrangement allows for the development of a specialized design philosophy as well as latitude in creative business practices. Advances in technology allow for decreased overhead, flexibility for contract positions and the ability to adjust firms as needed in response to economic conditions. Landscape architecture firms are in competition for projects with allied fields, such as architecture and engineering, which creates some difficulties in establishing a career and independence.

#### *4.4.3 Influences and Inspirations for Success*

All respondents remarked that each individual has their own ideas for inspiration, whether it is fame, spirituality or the satisfaction of a job well done. “There is no difference between men and women in landscape architecture on this issue.” The definition of success also changes as career and personal goals change.

“Focus and intelligence are key factors to success.” The application of knowledge to creative design is a fundamental factor to attaining proficiency in landscape architecture and promoting personal achievements for career advancement. There is a general sentiment that those who work hard and create thoughtful, innovative designs will be professionally and personally rewarded in their careers. One respondent also remarked, “Landscape architecture is fun to practice. This fun urges us on and give us the desire to continue in this field.”

Inspiration to succeed is the result of a passion, personal drive, interest and love of the field. Inspiration can also arise as a personal response to projects themselves or from a cultural and sociological awareness. One respondent stated that her inspiration

“is in healing landscapes” and is driven by a sense of responsibility toward the civic arena, especially for underprivileged or underrepresented populations. “We need to work with people not vested in the economy or receive normal representation in society, like children, the poor and the sick.”

Due to the diversity of the profession of landscape architecture, practitioners often have more control of the type and size of the projects they choose to work on. This allows women to have some degree of flexibility in their schedule and work hours to accommodate family commitments.

#### *4.4.4 Current and Future Career Opportunities*

Most respondents indicated that the opportunities for both men and women in private practice are “wide open.” “There is a shortage of landscape architects right now.” There are opportunities available in all areas of practice and that the ‘playing field’ has leveled to the degree that there are really no firms looking specifically for men or women to fill vacancies anymore. One respondent stated that although there are numerous opportunities available, “Women are not very clear on what opportunities are available. Smaller offices are preferred by women who are new to the profession, although bigger firms have better benefits, competition and training where less experienced landscape architects can develop skills better and faster.”

As the general public becomes more involved in the design process for public spaces, aesthetics are an important issue that landscape architects must address. Other specialty areas, such as environmentally sensitive design, transportation and context sensitive design are currently receiving focused attention and creating new

opportunities. Women need to explore developing “branches of landscape architecture and follow the leads of professionals in that direction to find new opportunities,” or follow developing trends in the profession. Ecology and urban planning are increasing the visibility and awareness of landscape architects and promoting them into lead positions on projects.

One respondent noted that women are increasingly receiving awards from the ASLA (American Society for Landscape Architects) for their work, are leading projects in greater numbers, and “are heading more firms now than ever before.” This respondent reasoned that, “Women are more organized and work within the client’s needs . . . women have a very promising future in landscape architecture.”

One respondent indicated that her practice ties her more closely to the architecture community than the landscape architecture community, so she did not offer comment on these issues.

Another respondent stated, “Private practice is harder due to the finances, the work required to get established and the skills required to succeed.”

#### *4.4.5 Critical Elements for the Success of Future Women in Private Practice*

Women should not let the issue of gender limit their opportunities within their own minds and they should not concentrate on negative issues. As one respondent stated, “Gender was more of an issue in the nineteen-seventies than it is now.” Women need to refrain from emphasizing the differences between the genders and stop making special exceptions. These exceptions may actually be a hindrance to women in the

profession. “Focus instead on the thoughtful, skilled professional attitude . . . hard work will pay off . . . .”

The pay differential between men and women is not much of an issue anymore according to some of the respondents and was not commented on by others.

Women need to become more aware of the tools that are available to them and utilize them to advance their careers. Women also need to utilize mentors and publish their work. Response to published work “builds platforms for movement” within the author’s career and promotes opportunities for others to discuss, learn and explore more about design and the profession.

Women need to explore developing trends in the profession, especially early in their careers. This expanded scope of the profession will focus career directives, expand knowledge in the profession and illuminate career opportunities.

There is a need for landscape architects to focus on design basics in public spaces to allow for flexibility over time. “Communities change and decline can occur because the design doesn’t fit the future generations.” Cultures constantly shift locations. Design needs to focus on the basics rather than cultural appropriateness.

“Women should be careful of their ethical practice . . . they should keep assessing their motivation as they continue to learn.” Women must be flexible to change within their careers as their perspectives change. They must remain faithful to their own motivations and inspirations and expand their skills to accommodate new goals and priorities.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

#### 5.1 Limitations

This is one of only a few studies to use the qualitative approach in researching the careers of women in landscape architecture. The broad scope of the research made it necessary to limit the number of elements analyzed to eight elements to allow for completion of the study within a manageable timeframe.

The time consuming nature of the interview process and the difficulty in arranging telephone interviews in different time zones throughout the United States serve as limiting factors for the number of interviews that can be practically arranged. Long telephone interviews also contribute to the expense of the study. The internet, email, and the telephone were used to arrange the interviews but there are limitations to these methods. Emails are easily ignored and deleted and telephone calls are easily routed to administrative assistants and voice mail. There is also the possibility that messages sent are never received by the intended recipients.

A small sample was obtained for this study but the in-depth nature of the interviews conducted produced strong data. The small sample size and the limiting factors of the study should be taken into consideration when interpreting the results.

Future studies to further develop the body of knowledge on this topic may utilize technological advances, such as video-conferencing, to improve the sample size and practicality in conducting interviews.

## 5.2 Discussion

### *5.2.1 Academic Practice*

Academic institutions need to address necessary changes in the tenure process to recruit and retain more full-time women faculty members. The conflict between family commitments and tenure requirements, coupled with the unpleasant reputation of the tenure process, make it difficult to recruit women into these positions.

Landscape Architecture programs are doing better than most professional programs in promoting women faculty into leadership positions as department heads, deans and provosts. However, the presence of women faculty is becoming increasingly important to programs as student demographics approach equal numbers of males and females. There is a need for women to serve as mentors and role models to guide the career paths of women entering into the profession.

Landscape architecture programs need to promote the critical writing skills of their students. There is currently a void of focused critique within the profession. As the profession diversifies and matures, quality writing will promote dialogue and guidance for the direction of the profession. This skill is necessary for women in the profession to not only promote their own work but to also increase the knowledge and literature base of women's presence and impact on the profession.

### *5.2.2 Public Practice*

The continuing decrease in funds for federal agencies, such as the National Park Service, are resulting in the reduction of design opportunities for landscape architects. Many design positions are being eliminated when current employees leave the agency or the positions are being outsourced to private contractors. However, there are still some opportunities at the federal level to serve as consultants and project managers for private contractors working on projects within the park system. There is also a need for new landscape architects to replace the large number of pending retirees within the next five to ten years.

Women landscape architects are finding innovative ways to procure positions within the federal agencies. The most prevalent method is the application of landscape architecture skills into non-traditional positions, such as Resource Managers, Park Rangers and Environmental Specialists. Many of the skills and much of the knowledge necessary for these positions parallel those needed in landscape architecture. The combination of social consciousness, teamwork and social skills that are inherent to most women are advantageous in the public agencies.

Positions at the municipal and state level are often more prevalent due to the availability of a variety of funding sources for localized projects. Women are also at an advantage for these positions due to their minority status designation during the application process.

Collaborative projects between governmental agencies and universities, private interests and professional organizations are offering new opportunities for women in

landscape architecture. These collaborations expand the knowledge of the profession and fulfill the social and cultural needs of the communities they serve.

### *5.2.3 Private Practice*

Public acceptance of women in leadership roles and as project managers is continually increasing. This acceptance has increased the confidence and support level of women seeking to advance their careers. However, women in private practice need to become more involved with professional organizations to prevent isolation from the profession at large. The tendency to focus on the individual's career path can lead to a narrow view of the opportunities and developments available in the profession at large.

Technological advances have afforded many women flexibility in their schedules and careers during their child-bearing years. Prior to these advancements, many women would withdraw from the profession for a period of time due to the conflicting demands of career and family commitments. The availability of telecommuting, teleconferencing and computer networks have altered business practices to allow for more flexibility in schedule and work hours. The additional range of choices in full or part-time employment, firm size and project type attract women into private practice as well as.

Self-employment is the most prevalent method utilized for career advancement for highly successful women in landscape architecture. This arrangement allows for specialization in a particular field, adherence to a design philosophy and control over the type and size of projects worked on. This also allows for some flexibility in schedule and work hours, but is contingent on the projects in development. Self-

employed women have an advantage due to the designation of 'Minority or Women-Owned Business' that allows for preference on governmental contracts.

### 5.3 Implications for the Profession of Landscape Architecture

The expanding role of women in the profession of landscape architecture is occurring at a time of rapid change within the profession. This increased presence will bring unprecedented changes to the philosophies and business practices currently utilized. The presence of women will be most important at the academic level where the impact on the future of the profession will be the greatest due to the influence on the development of future generations of women in the profession.

There is a need for critical writing to guide the profession during this period of expanding diversity in knowledge and application. Published literature will also increase the historical knowledge of pioneering women in the profession and promote the innovations and entrepreneurship of women currently in practice.

Women are beginning to use their inherent gender differences as tools for innovation in design and collaborative business practices. The 'gender issue' is slowly becoming one of celebrated collaboration of complementary strengths rather than one of contention and dispute.

The passage of time will dictate whether the attainment of a 'critical mass' of women in the profession constitutes a paradigm shift in the practice of landscape architecture.

#### 5.4 Future Research Needed

The discourse surrounding gender issues is complex and involves issues important to the development of the profession. While this study answers many questions it also gives rise to many new ones. Some of the issues that are deserving of future research are explored.

The relative lack of racial minorities within the profession in the United States is probably one of the most important issues that should be addressed. This topic was not breached by the respondents in this study, indicating that this is not a prevalent issue in the profession. Studies regarding the awareness of the profession in minority populations would help the profession diversify and would increase the cultural awareness of the profession. The profession would also benefit from an in-depth study of the tools, methods and techniques used to recruit minority students into academic programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Identifying prevalent personality traits of successful women in landscape architecture is worthy of further research. Exploration of case studies to identify prevalent traits may reflect the level of success women achieve and the areas of practice that they pursue. This may provide beneficial information for students in high school researching careers paths and for college students seeking areas of specialization within programs of landscape architecture.

Another area for future research is the implication of the digital age on the practice of women in landscape architecture. Developments in technology have changed the nature of business practices within the field allowing for greater mobility.

The digital age has hallmarked the invention of the “twenty-four hour office” where one business operates multiple international locations around the globe that are digitally connected, allowing for non-stop communication and project development. These advancements present many opportunities for women in the profession in regards to family commitments and mobility issues. There will also be many unforeseeable implications for the practice and business of the profession.

The recent en masse entrance of women into the profession will undoubtedly have a profound impact on the profession. The resulting changes in areas of business practices, critical debates on design and the direction and diversity of the profession are worth of future research.

Investigations into whether the approaching critical mass of women in the profession constitutes a paradigm shift in the profession is also worthy of study, critique and much insightful debate.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCRIPT

## **INTERVIEW SCRIPT**

Thank you for your participation in this research study. As indicated previously during the recruitment process, the purpose of this study is to examine the influences affecting the career patterns of prominent women in the public, private and academic practices of landscape architecture.

The following questions are identical to those previously provided to you upon your acceptance into the study.

Please answer each of the questions to the best of your knowledge and ability:

1. What impediments do women face in the public/private/academic practice of landscape architecture?
2. What methods do women employ to overcome these impediments?
3. What advantages do women have in the public/private/academic practice of landscape architecture?
4. What inspires or influences women to succeed in the public/private/academic practice of landscape architecture?
5. What steps, methods and/or pathways do women employ to advance their careers in the public/private/academic practice of landscape architecture?
6. What perceptions do women have of current career opportunities in the public/private/academic practice of landscape architecture?
7. What perceptions do women have of future career opportunities in the public/private/academic practice of landscape architecture?
8. What beneficial career advice and/or suggestions do women in the public/private/academic practice of landscape architecture have for future women students of landscape architecture?

Thank you for your participation in this study. Your time and information have been invaluable to this research study. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW RESPONSES

## INTERVIEW RESPONSES

### Respondent #1

Q1. What impediments do women face in the public practice of landscape architecture?

*Demographics are the main impediment at the current time. National Agencies are comprised of mostly white males. But ethnicity and gender are not the only issues. There is also a prominence of certain temperaments among both the men and the women in these agencies. The traditional approach ('we've always done it that way'), and the science-based approach are the dominant temperaments. There is also some uncertainty within public agencies about the proper role and function of landscape architects. During the nineteen-seventies the Committee on Women in Landscape Architecture (American Society for Landscape Architects) held workshops titled 'Dynamics in Numeric Minorities' that were of great benefit to women in landscape architecture. These workshops depersonalized impediments by demonstrating that the dynamics of the demographics were a bigger impediment than gender itself. This gave women a new perspective toward their professional frustrations and opened up the road to success.*

Q2. What methods do women employ to overcome these impediments?

*Networking and involvement in professional reference groups, particularly the Committee on Women in Landscape Architecture (American Society of Landscape Architects). The individuals within these groups identify with each other's goals, frustrations and abilities. This is something that is often lacking in a public agency where there are many different professions represented and possibly only one individual from each profession. There is limited professional support in these situations. Continual training is also important, especially workshops that specifically address landscape architects. General training that is open to all groups is often too general, does not address the needs of landscape architects and is usually geared toward a masculine business model. Women that are in line management roles have to find new techniques to accomplish the same objectives as a male would. It is easier for a woman to be accepted in a staff position than it is for positions of authority and line management roles.*

Q3. What advantages do women have in the public practice of landscape architecture?

*The Federal Government has the same pay scale for all employees and the openness of salary information evens the pay differential. There is little negotiation on salaries due to these standards.*

Q4. What inspires or influences women to succeed in the public practice of landscape architecture?

*The resource itself, the natural environment, is the main influence. Women are spiritually nourished by the natural landscape around them. Salary is not the main driver for landscape architects in public agencies. The government does tend to have higher starting salaries than private firms do, but long-term salary gains are less than in private practice.*

Q5. What steps, methods and/or pathways do women employ to advance their careers in the public practice of landscape architecture?

*They go where the need is, not where they are comfortable. They must decide when to move up into a line management position. This can be accomplished by staying at the same location or transferring to a new location or agency. This decision is more complicated for women with families. The mobility necessary for professional development may compromise their personal life. Women must assess and plan for these priorities in the phases of their life. Their accomplishments may challenge the priorities of their personal and professional lives.*

Q6. What perceptions do women have of current career opportunities in the public practice of landscape architecture?

*The current demographics of the Federal Government will result in lots of opportunities in the near future. It is a good time to get a foot in the door. There are a lot of people less than five years away from retirement in the Federal Government. This will result in a 'brain-drain' and loss of experience and knowledge unless there are people trained to replace them. The government is currently being run like a business, but the business model does not work for the natural resource agencies. There is a lot of paperwork needed to account for monetary expenditures but little or none to account for the status of the natural resources themselves. These resources have monetary advantages and value that are often overlooked. In this way, there will be lots of opportunities for women in the Federal Government in the next five to ten years.*

Q7. What perceptions do women have of future career opportunities in the public practice of landscape architecture?

*There is a great need for people who think outside the box. People need to be hired because of their differences, not in spite of them. There is growing recognition for the diversity of ways the issues can be approached. Society needs concepts that work. People want a voice in what happens to their natural resources. There is also a need for landscape architects who know how to talk to people. Women are usually adept at this as we are brought up to be good hostesses.*

Q8. What beneficial career advice and/or suggestions do women in the public practice of landscape architecture have for future women students of landscape architecture?

*Find someone in the specific public agency you are interested in and talk to them before you graduate. They can help prepare you and share advice on 'jumping through the hoops'. Most federal government jobs have specialized experience requirements. It is easier to take an additional course to meet these requirements while you are still enrolled than it is after you graduate. Transcripts are of critical importance. College course descriptions are often required if there are any questions about your experience level. Public agencies don't usually list jobs for landscape architects. There are many jobs that function as landscape architects but have different titles, such as 'Natural Resource Specialists'.*

## **Respondent #2**

Q1. What impediments do women face in the private practice of landscape architecture?

*There are no impediments. Some women may be hindered around the age of marriage in that some employers may not be willing to employ women who might want to have children. I was able to rise quickly to a Senior Associate position within the first four years in a private firm. Following that, I spent seven years in the public sector and quickly rose in seniority to where I had an associate and an intern working with me within three years. I have heard that other women have had problems, but I have not experienced any.*

Q2. What methods do women employ to overcome these impediments?

*I'm not sure. I do not know of anything specific.*

Q3. What advantages do women have in the private practice of landscape architecture?

*Women have a better perspective of the 'user' - the needs, uses and preferences (of the user). Especially when it comes to ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) issues. ADA applies to strollers also and women are more attuned to this. Women are more aware of the time, reasons and uses of people in spaces. Women are more interactive in spaces with other users as they are generally the ones in charge of others. Two examples are Girl Scout leaders and mothers. Because women are more in tune with the user needs, their designs are more in tune with the user's needs. There is a difference between paper design and utilitarian design. The practical use has to supercede fancy computer graphics.*

Q4. What inspires or influences women to succeed in the private practice of landscape architecture?

*The inner ideas for each person inspire them, such as fame, spirituality, etc. The satisfaction of a job well done. There is no difference between men and women in landscape architecture on this issue. Due to the field of practice and the types of people*

*that become landscape architects, the inspirations are the same, regardless of whether they are in public or private practice.*

Q5. What steps, methods and/or pathways do women employ to advance their careers in the private practice of landscape architecture?

*I did not do anything extra and still succeeded quickly. I just worked hard and moved up. Quality work is an aiding factor. This may be different in academics where there is a more established criteria for advancement. People also have different definitions of success, whether it be the attainment of a certain position or personal fulfillment. In a private firm, the landscape architect follows the client's goals. Successful design is one that fulfills the client's needs. Communication skills are important to succeed in the job.*

Q6. What perceptions do women have of current career opportunities in the private practice of landscape architecture?

*The opportunities are wide open. There are terrific opportunities for men and women in all areas of practice. No one firm is specifically looking for men or women to fill positions anymore. The playing field is pretty level now.*

Q7. What perceptions do women have of future career opportunities in the private practice of landscape architecture?

*Again, the opportunities are wide open. The sky is the limit. Women are more organized and work within the client's needs. More women are the heads of firm now than ever before. The number of awards in ASLA (American Society of Landscape Architects) to women has increased and the number of women leading projects has also increased. Women have a very promising future in landscape architecture.*

Q8. What beneficial career advice and/or suggestions do women in the private practice of landscape architecture have for future women students of landscape architecture?

*Don't be limited by gender in your own mind. This issue did not occur to me to be a limiting factor. Gender was more of an issue during the nineteen seventies than it is now. Women should take advantage of the tools available to them. Don't concentrate on the negatives. The pay differential between men and women is not much of an issue anymore. Women have come a long way. I have been very fortunate. I have not had any problems in my career and do not know of anyone who has real problems.*

### **Respondent #3**

Q1. What impediments do women face in the academic practice of landscape architecture?

*The number one impediment is a general problem or women in academics, and that is the tenure track for women into leadership roles. There is a real conflict between the*

*tenure clock and the biological clock. The demands of the required service work, publishing and teaching conflict with family responsibilities. The impulse for women in academics is to not pursue a tenure track position due to this conflict. There are no statistics on this that I know of. Women tend to drop out of academics when they have a family due to conflicting demands. Women on the landscape architecture faculty are often perceived by students as being easier to talk to, so they tend to take on a counseling role. This creates an extra demand on their time. This extra burden is akin to women faculty members to whom the nurturing role comes naturally. This adds to all the other demands of the position. This is especially true in studios where the knowledge-seeking role of the student is coupled with the mentoring role of the faculty. This role is different than the male role as a faculty member. There are generation gaps in academics in landscape architecture. There are the senior male leaders versus the intermediate faculty versus the beginning faculty. There are a lot of faculty nearing retirement. The senior male leaders are looking to the women faculty to do the nurturing role so that they don't have to. However, the women faculty are still expected to do as just as much research to fulfill the tenure requirements.*

Q2. What methods do women employ to overcome these impediments?

*There are 'superwomen' who are doing it all and trying to balance the demands of academia and family. But the demands of this balance are hard. It's super tiring and stressful and takes its toll. There is a lot of burn-out. Most of these 'superwomen' have very cooperative and understanding husbands. Usually their husbands are not in academics or are in non-tenure track positions. Some universities are responding to the needs of women faculty through policy changes. Some of the changes being talked about are lengthening the tenure clock or suspending the tenure clock for time to have children, one year, for example. These changes are being talked about but have not been resolved or implemented. It's a tiny step, but it's a step in the right direction. The majority of new students in landscape architecture are women. There is a big push to get more women on the faculties. As more women come through the landscape architecture programs there will be an increase in the number of women in the pool of applicants for faculty positions. Right now, the pool of women is small. The increase in women faculty may push universities for changes in the tenure system. Universities are slow to change. They generally do not respond to an issue until it is a problem. The issue of women's careers versus family is not restricted to academics. It is also a problem in private practice. Some offices are accommodating, some are not. Women bring up the issue but there is not a push for change in the status quo, in either private practice or in academics.*

Q3. What advantages do women have in the academic practice of landscape architecture?

*Women are collaborative. They operate as a tribe. Men operate as a pack. Women work in teams and are interested in the group as a whole. This is good for the profession of landscape architecture. Universities are collaborative organizations. There is a governance structure for decision-making and interdisciplinary interests that*

*require teamwork skills. Women excel at this and can apply these skills as well as teach them to others.*

Q4. What inspires or influences women to succeed in the academic practice of landscape architecture?

*The same things that attracted them to landscape architecture. They teach to impact the next generation of the profession. The ability to impact the quality of life without worrying about profit is a big bonus. They enjoy learning and doing research. They also enjoy sharing the knowledge that they have gained.*

Q5. What steps, methods and/or pathways do women employ to advance their careers in the academic practice of landscape architecture?

*There is lots of variation. Landscape architecture programs tend to advance women in academics more than other professions, for example, Architecture. There are more women leaders in landscape architecture academics than in other design fields as department chairs, deans or provost. Women are also moving into governmental positions through academics. Women scholars and researchers are increasing in strength and in visibility. Women are creating non-profit organizations as 'centers of learning' to utilize interdisciplinary collaborations to design and plan for communities. Women are pioneering new avenues in landscape architecture.*

Q6. What perceptions do women have of current career opportunities in the academic practice of landscape architecture?

*Not sure. There is a problem. Women in landscape architecture see limited opportunity in academics due to the tenure track. The time demands for teaching, counseling, studios, mentoring, research publishing and recruitment seem daunting. Academics are a mystery and opportunities are unknown by most. This makes it difficult to recruit women. The tenure process has a bad reputation. There is some change coming, but very slowly. The development of more paths and mentoring will help change this, but the knowledge of these new paths must be spread out to be effective. I am currently creating a research institute called Restoration Institute in Landscape Architecture, in South Carolina that is a private and academic cooperative. It will be a profit engine for the state, a first of its kind. Women are creating entrepreneurships. They are using academics as the perfect venue to create new centers, positions and opportunities. There is a need in academics to make students more aware of what faculty are doing to increase their awareness of the opportunities in academics, through their research, publications, and collaborative projects.*

Q7. What perceptions do women have of future career opportunities in the academic practice of landscape architecture?

*There is a problem here. There is no difference in future opportunities as compared to now, good or bad. There are two main trends developing in academia. The first trend is toward having more Ph.D.'s in the faculty line. This will require more current students to seek advanced degrees to be eligible for these positions in the future. The second*

*trend is toward more non-tenure track faculty members. The 'Professor in Practice' positions, which are non-publishing and non-research positions, attract more women as these positions are less limiting on their personal lives. These positions are limiting as there is no chance of advancement up the ranks as these are non-tenure track positions. In contrast, more women are entering into leadership roles. More women are heading departments and schools as deans and provosts. The 'glass ceiling' is leaving.*

Q8. What beneficial career advice and/or suggestions do women in the academic practice of landscape architecture have for future women students of landscape architecture?

*Academics are the best career path she can think of. The field is dynamic and is changing and will have a large impact on the future of the profession. Women will dominate academics in the next fifteen to twenty years. Women need to explore avenues to be involved in universities to become familiar with the process and be exposed to the opportunities available. Women also need to pursue advanced degrees as the doctorate level will be required for most tenure track positions within the next twenty years. Getting information to women about opportunities in academics is a challenge. Most information is not very visible. It will be important for women currently in academics to pass this information on to other women. There are many women leaders in the private practice of landscape architecture. However, the most influential positions that women can have are in academics and in government as these positions have a broader impact. These positions have opened up opportunities for women to advance in their careers, maybe more so than in private practice. Most private firms are still run by men. Women graduates from our program still run into stereotypes when trying to advance in private firms.*

#### **Respondent #4**

Q1. What impediments do women face in the private practice of landscape architecture?

*Today there are not as many. There were many when I started though. I used to take two men with me to meetings to help get contracts, but this backfired sometimes.*

Q2. What methods do women employ to overcome these impediments?

*None, since these impediments don't exist anymore. Now men and women work out issues through communication. There is nothing unique to women to overcome impediments.*

Q3. What advantages do women have in the private practice of landscape architecture?

*The biggest advantage is a legal one that involves the designation of 'minority or women-owned business'. There is an approval process for this designation, but firms*

*get preference for contracts from the government once they have obtained this. Women can also be recruited to be part of a team with a male-owned firm to expand their diversity. The second advantage is during the construction phase of a project. Construction workers tend to have a natural courtesy and politeness toward women, which makes them more cooperative. Women can correct mistakes in the field easier. There is more acceptance of women in the field now than there was before.*

Q4. What inspires or influences women to succeed in the private practice of landscape architecture?

*Landscape architecture is diverse. Practitioners have a choice of small or large projects. Women with families can control their hours easier, to some extent. Landscape architecture is not a normal forty-hour job, but it does offer some flexibility with schedules. It is not a nine-to-five type of job.*

Q5. What steps, methods and/or pathways do women employ to advance their careers in the private practice of landscape architecture?

*Women try to be good professionals. This is the same for men, though. We try to be thoughtful, creative and focus our minds and our skills. There is currently a shortage of hard-working people, in general. This is the same for males and females. Those who do work hard will succeed.*

Q6. What perceptions do women have of current career opportunities in the private practice of landscape architecture?

*Landscape architecture is fun to practice. This fun urges us on and gives us the desire to continue in this field. Students often come into this profession with this mindset because they have heard this sentiment from other professionals.*

Q7. What perceptions do women have of future career opportunities in the private practice of landscape architecture?

*There is a shortage of landscape architects right now. The environment is currently a focus within landscape architecture. People tend to go back to school when economic times are bad to further their education. Now is a good time to find a job in landscape architecture. There are lots of opportunities available.*

Q8. What beneficial career advice and/or suggestions do women in the private practice of landscape architecture have for future women students of landscape architecture?

*Women should stop focusing on being different. Thinking that we are different makes us different. We really aren't that different. Focus instead on the thoughtful, skilled professional attitude. Focus and intelligence are key factors to success. This focus will equal the balance between men and women in the profession. Women need to stop making special exceptions. This may actually hinder them. Hard work will pay off more. The sky is the limit for opportunities for women and men. Creativity and the application of knowledge to work are the main factors in career advancement.*

## **Respondent #5**

Q1. What impediments do women face in the academic practice of landscape architecture?

*There were many impediments early on, around forty years ago. But many of these impediments were the same as in any profession. Women stayed at home and the men had jobs. These were traditional reasons, not anything specific to landscape architecture. Academics in landscape architecture have improved over the past two decades. There are no impediments now. There are many women in academics now and there is nothing in particular that is an impediment. Women are in academics all over now and are achieving tenure. The biggest impediment for a career in academics is a lack of good writing skills.*

Q2. What methods do women employ to overcome these impediments?

*Women must work twice as hard as men, especially in parallel positions, to get tenure and respect. They do this through publishing, lecturing, etc. Women who practice in both academics and private practice have a hard time as it is very hard to do both roles.*

Q3. What advantages do women have in the academic practice of landscape architecture?

*My focus is on the social implications of design and planning. Women have a vague advantage in social/human research. People defer to women as women 'know' about human relationships. There is a public perception that women are better at social analysis. In research study situations, being a woman is advantageous. Males in this field have felt disadvantaged because of this. For example, with studies regarding children's environments, people wonder why men would even study it. Women are designers with a social consciousness and a sense of community design. They have a sensitivity toward ADA issues and the elderly.*

Q4. What inspires or influences women to succeed in the academic practice of landscape architecture?

*Ambition to make a name for themselves. But this is the same for all professions. I was inspired by two women: Rosyln Lindheim and Catherine Bower Wooster. Ms. Lindheim was in healthcare design and questioned why architects were building such institutional hospitals. Ms. Wooster was a planner who focused on the social design issues of low income housing in the nineteen thirties through the nineteen sixties. I was inspired by senior women in the profession with values that I shared. This inspiration led my direction in the field. Do some good in this world. I questioned what was being done in landscape architecture. The emphasis at the time was on beauty and aesthetics, not on the users. Designs were lacking social content. I wanted to 'buck the trend' - who are we designing for? The silent minorities were not being represented - the children, the elderly and the poor women. Those who could not speak for themselves. Early in my career, while I was preparing my master's thesis, the chair of the landscape architecture program was disparaging and remarked that the social implications of*

*design were a luxury, not a necessity. A junior faculty member encouraged me to continue to pursue my studies as no one else was asking these questions. He encouraged me to teach about this, which I did. My thesis eventually became a book and developed into a required course at the university. This led to my obtaining tenure. I was able to turn an impediment into an opportunity. That junior faculty member had both inspired me and prompted me into my current career.*

Q5. What steps, methods and/or pathways do women employ to advance their careers in the academic practice of landscape architecture?

*Keep up with the field. Forge a unique approach or agenda that gives an edge or brings a new angle. There is a lot of knowledge and growth to come in areas of ecology and sustainability, for example. Become highly qualified in a field of interest. Read interdisciplinary articles in fields related to landscape architecture. Get articles published in peer reviewed journals, especially in tenure track positions. This requirement applies to any academic field, not just landscape architecture. Designers can't always write well. This is actually an impediment for most in academics. There is a conflict in the design fields in academia. Design awards don't count as much as published works in tenure reviews. This issue is especially pertinent to professors who teach design studios. Committees are often composed of individuals from multiple fields who can't judge designs but can judge writing. This puts the professors in a difficult position and makes it more difficult for them to obtain tenure.*

Q6. What perceptions do women have of current career opportunities in the academic practice of landscape architecture?

*I have retired from academics so I don't think I can answer this.*

Q7. What perceptions do women have of future career opportunities in the academic practice of landscape architecture?

*Again, I have retired from academics so I don't think I can answer this.*

Q8. What beneficial career advice and/or suggestions do women in the academic practice of landscape architecture have for future women students of landscape architecture?

*Work hard and stay focused. Get good experience within a design office, even if you plan to teach in the future. Be well read in your chosen profession. Listen to famous designers, even if you do not like them or their work. Study their presentation styles, their philosophy, how they present themselves and their work, their designs and graphic styles. Travel. This is very important. Look at designed places all over the world. We are too isolated here in the United States. Stay in touch with different cultures. Some countries are way ahead of the United States in certain aspects of design. Work and travel before going to graduate school, if possible. I encouraged my students to travel after undergraduate graduation. Don't leave this task until later in life, it won't get any easier or cheaper. Learn about life and your field of interest. Your perspective may change. As you mature you will be more dedicated to your studies. Mature students*

*make better master's candidates. You may also end up going into a different field or change your focus all together. You will have a new perspective on what you want. Get out and live life. Mature a little. Find out what you want to learn and specialize in it. Time off is not actually 'time off'.*

## **Respondent #6**

Q1. What impediments do women face in the private practice of landscape architecture?

*Very few at the present. Landscape architecture is a woman's field. Developers are generally men, so any impediments there depend on a woman's comfort level or personal bias of working with men. There seems to be less discomfort or bias with residential developers, more with big business. It's a question of ability versus comfort level.*

Q2. What methods do women employ to overcome these impediments?

*Being very capable and personable. Flexible. Being good at 'gauging the weather' and reading people. Personality types have an impact in terms of reactions against hostility and comfort level with public speaking. Being able to set the terms and engage in conversation. The new generations of women are team players as opposed to older generations who were more cheerleaders on the sidelines. Women focus on others and develop relationships with the users and their clients.*

Q3. What advantages do women have in the private practice of landscape architecture?

*We are good negotiators and can multi-task easier. Women's thinking is not linear, moving from issue to issue. Women are good at floating between projects. This is especially true of working mothers.*

Q4. What inspires or influences women to succeed in the private practice of landscape architecture?

*A personal and cultural response to life. What is success? What is our personal definition? Is this being fulfilled or not? These are questions women explore in their career and in life. My personal definition of success is to have taken the gifts that I have and developed them to the fullest extent of my ability and to share them with the community. The definition of success also changes through life as goals change. Inspiration is also a response to our work. My inspiration is in healing landscapes. In the civic arena, there is little work available as this is an under-funded area. We need to create and work with people not vested in the economy or receive normal representation in society, like children, the poor and the sick. Transportation is another area that has little or no representation of civic and cultural values. A highway can be a healing space. My background is in cultural anthropology and sociology. Context*

*sensitive design is important. Who is using the space, why is a design proposed for this space? Communities change and decline can occur because the design doesn't fit the future generations. There is a constant shifting of cultures in and out of areas and balance is hard to obtain. Design basics are stronger than cultural appropriateness. It allows for more flexibility over time. What are we creating? Find the big picture over time. What transcends culture? Culture can be used in a cliché or as a Disney approach to history. For instance, Japanese people don't really use red lanterns anymore. In contrast, the highways built by the government CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) in the eastern and southern United States were built utilizing the aesthetics. But, current highway standards call for straight, plain lines. Things are 'turning on their ear'. People now want the aesthetics in opposition to the straight, plain highway standards.*

Q5. What steps, methods and/or pathways do women employ to advance their careers in the private practice of landscape architecture?  
*Self employment is my method of advancing. I had my own private design-build firm prior to coming into landscape architecture. I found landscape architecture to be more intellectual than straight construction in design-build. Studying the cultural narrative of the landscape has been the best approach for my current firm. This may not work in someone else's firm though. Creativity is addressing the issues that come up in a business, such as how to fund the business. My firm currently does several million dollars per year. We outsource a lot of the work due to the abilities of technology. We also do a lot of architectural work, so I contract architects and engineers in addition to my own staff. I have two AutoCAD technicians in addition to others. This arrangement has been very flexible in that it allows us to expand and contract the business as needed. It also results in low overhead.*

Q6. What perceptions do women have of current career opportunities in the private practice of landscape architecture?  
*I have no idea. I'm not very connected to the landscape architecture community. I'm more connected with architecture. It is my opinion that there are more opportunities than ever for women in landscape architecture.*

Q7. What perceptions do women have of future career opportunities in the private practice of landscape architecture?  
*Again, I have no idea.*

Q8. What beneficial career advice and/or suggestions do women in the private practice of landscape architecture have for future women students of landscape architecture?  
*Women should be careful of their ethical practice. Why are they in landscape architecture? They should keep assessing their motivation as they continue to learn. Perspectives can change and we must be flexible and listen to our own inner voices. What is that voice telling us? How are we training that voice? How are we following*

*what it is telling us? Also, write. Write books. I wrote 'Ten Landscapes' and received a lot of response that it helped others. It gave others opportunities to explore, learn and reflect. This response builds platforms for movement.*

### **Respondent #7**

Q1. What impediments do women face in the private practice of landscape architecture?

*The same as everywhere. The public has a confidence problem with the perception of women being able to handle projects. Clients treat women differently than men. A little change has occurred, but not enough is happening fast enough.*

Q2. What methods do women employ to overcome these impediments?

*We can become tough in attitude and act more rough and confident like a man. Or, we can become very knowledgeable of people and situations that women are walking into on a project. 'Wow' them with your knowledge. Any devices of professional attitudes are helpful.*

Q3. What advantages do women have in the private practice of landscape architecture?

*No advantages. Women's traits are a result of society's expectations and social raising. It's not just gender itself. Women have a lack of access to education, funds, mentors and advancement opportunities in general.*

Q4. What inspires or influences women to succeed in the private practice of landscape architecture?

*The same as other professions. We must have a passion to put up with the nonsense in the field. We must have a personal drive, an interest in it and a love of it.*

Q5. What steps, methods and/or pathways do women employ to advance their careers in the private practice of landscape architecture?

*Not many due to difficulties advancing in jobs and careers. Women are starting to use mentors now, which has worked for men for years. In school, professors are mentors for courses, direction and jobs. In jobs, students work an apprenticeship first, which is a good way to obtain a mentor.*

Q6. What perceptions do women have of current career opportunities in the private practice of landscape architecture?

*I don't know. It's more of a statistical thing. Women are not very clear on what opportunities are available. Small offices are preferred by women who are new to the profession, although big offices have better benefits, competition and training where a less experienced landscape architect can develop skills better and faster. Private*

*practice is harder due to the finances, work required to get established and the skills required to succeed.*

Q7. What perceptions do women have of future career opportunities in the private practice of landscape architecture?

*I don't know. Exploring particular branches of landscape architecture and follow the leads of professionals in that direction to find new opportunities. Or, follow a trend that's developing, such as ecology, technology or philosophy. Do this searching very early in your career to find your path in landscape architecture.*

Q8. What beneficial career advice and/or suggestions do women in the private practice of landscape architecture have for future women students of landscape architecture?

*Be in love with what you do. Be obsessed. Landscape architecture is subject to other careers in competition for projects, like architects and engineers. It is difficult to establish a career and independence. Landscape architecture is almost a secondary profession, although ecology and urban planning are moving landscape architecture up the ladder into lead positions. Have a sense of how to get where you want to go. Get beyond the 'pretty it up' scope of landscape architecture. Think big and go in the direction you fit and want. Seek a big scope, be aware of it and find ways to get there. Work in a big office and do an apprenticeship. The obvious routes work well for most women. You need mentors to help get your career going. Stay informed of the profession. Write, publish, research, travel and attend symposiums to expand your view of the profession. School course work can help, but it is not always 'real' enough. It's good for background, but is more experimental. It teaches the basics of putting a project together. Studios are a testing ground for students. Can you design? Do you like it? Are you good at it? Can you handle it?*

### **Respondent #8**

Q1. What impediments do women face in the public practice of landscape architecture?

*There are no issues in particular now. Only in individual agencies perhaps. There are so many women practicing in the public arena now.*

Q2. What methods do women employ to overcome these impediments?

*There are no ways in general. It is all on an individual basis and based on individual problems.*

Q3. What advantages do women have in the public practice of landscape architecture?

*None specific to public practice. Women in general have better people skills. Women must be cooperative to create a win-win situation. This is more important than skills alone. Landscape architecture is geared toward women's personality in general, as opposed to men in architecture. Individual personality also applies.*

Q4. What inspires or influences women to succeed in the public practice of landscape architecture?

*The same things that influence them to succeed in any field. Mentors can help. Men and women have the same reasons for success; stability, benefits, etc.*

Q5. What steps, methods and/or pathways do women employ to advance their careers in the public practice of landscape architecture?

*Things that apply to any career; networking, doing a good job and taking a team approach. Public practice design services are all interdisciplinary. Landscape architects must take an interdisciplinary approach to use their individual talents along with architects, engineers, etc. Most government design projects are being contracted out now. Quality of design is being lost because of this. The government needs people to approve guidelines for contractors. There is a lack of historical sensitivity to the parks by private contractors. Most landscape architecture firms are not sensitive to the natural and cultural resources in historic parks. This does depend on who manages the contracts and the quality of the standards. The federal government will spend less money on design in the future so there will be fewer jobs in the future, even as demand is growing. The Park Service cannot fill jobs once they have been vacated.*

Q6. What perceptions do women have of current career opportunities in the public practice of landscape architecture?

*Perceptions are just that, and are not attached to reality.*

Q7. What perceptions do women have of future career opportunities in the public practice of landscape architecture?

*Again, perceptions are not attached to reality.*

Q8. What beneficial career advice and/or suggestions do women in the public practice of landscape architecture have for future women students of landscape architecture?

*The future of landscape architecture is excellent. State and municipal governments have more money, so there are more opportunities there for both men and women. Private practice also has a lot of job opportunities. Most firms don't differentiate between hiring men and women. There are women deans in academics now, women are firm principals in private practice. There are great changes ahead, but most of the changes will be generic in terms of gender.*

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## BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Catherine Acuna was born and raised in northern Indiana. She received a bachelor's degree in Biology from the University of Evansville in 1992. Afterward, she was involved in laboratory research at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas, investigating components for vaccines against respiratory diseases. Her interests in art, plant biology and the natural environment led her to pursue a graduate degree in landscape architecture from the University of Texas at Arlington, Texas. She currently resides in Dallas, Texas with her husband, Michael.