

HAZEL VARNER VS. UNIVERSITY OF
ROCHESTER

ACTION ADDENDA

On January 13, 1979 the Supreme Court of the State of New York ruled that the University of Rochester had paid Hazel Varner less than it paid her male colleagues -- solely on the basis of sex. The trial was long and costly; the jury heard testimony from both sides for eleven weeks. The total cost to Hazel Varner was in excess of \$100,000. In addition to this financial burden, she had to bear four years of emotional stress and upheaval. Inevitably that stress accompanies any sex-discrimination case where one woman stands up to a wealthy, powerful institution which can sustain any cost necessary to preserve the status quo.

In the process, Hazel's husband, Kenneth Varner, was fired from his position as Head Registrar at the University of Rochester. After his unjust firing, he became mentally depressed. He committed suicide in December, 1975. Hazel was left with a fourteen-year old son and her lawsuit.

The jury found sex-discrimination in equal pay, outrageous conduct causing mental disturbance to Kenneth Varner, and outrageous and shocking behavior on the part of the University toward Kenneth Varner. The decision, however, did not carry with it a monetary award anywhere near the debt incurred by the lawsuit. The award was \$7500. Hazel Varner is left with an \$80,000 legal bill.

The Varner case is just one of thousands of sex-discrimination in educational employment cases throughout the United States in which women must sue to secure their rights under the law. The outcome is a small but important step in accomplishing institutional compliance with antidiscriminatory regulations.

If you wish to contribute to the Hazel Varner Legal Defense Fund, contact Johanna Battista, 735-7996.

Mohawk Valley N.O.W. supports the N.O.W.-NYS legislative program, and in particular has selected four legislative priorities: abortion, domestic violence/battered women, education and family planning and contraception.

In writing to your legislators, cite the following bills which have already been introduced as legislation favorable to our legislative program and positions:

- A-14 Segal -- repeals laws which ban the sale of contraceptives to minors
- A-648 Miller -- requires Health Commissioners or officers to make readily available a listing of Family Planning services in the particular area.
- A- 2666 and S-1908 -- requires drug manufacturing companies to insert an information sheet for drugs which may be harmful to pregnant women.

Cite the following bill which has already been introduced and has many sponsors, as legislation that is definitely not favorable to our legislative program nor our positions:

- A4258 Connelly -- bars Medicaid funding for abortion except to save the life of the mother.

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BOOK REVIEW

Kate Oser will review Helen Iglesias' 'Starting: Early, Anew, Over, Late' on Thursday, May 10 at 11 a.m. at the YWCA; again on Wednesday, May 16 at noon at Kirkland Art Center.

HAVE YOU READ?

Before Their Time: Six Women Writers of the Eighteenth Century, edited by Katharine M. Rogers (Frederick Ungar)

Women and Sports by Janice Kaplan (Viking)

Turning Points by Ellen Goodman (Doubleday)

The Dinner Party: A Symbol of Our Heritage by Judy Chicago (Anchor Press-Doubleday)