

Weeks v. Southern Bell: Breaking Discriminatory Employment
Barriers for Women in the Workforce

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*“I’m going to have that job, one way or another! Somebody’s going to listen to me,
if I have to go all the way to Chief Justice Earl Warren.”*

–Lorena Weeks, 1969

Despite years of hard work and protest for equal rights, women still were not given the same opportunities as men. Continuing this fight, Lorena Weeks sought to break barriers in women’s employment in 1966 in Wadley, Georgia. After being denied a promotion at Southern Bell because of her gender, Weeks took her case to court as the first discrimination case filed under the Civil Rights Act of 1964. After three years of fighting in both district and appellate courts, Weeks’s determination and support from the women’s movement earned her the job as switchman and broke gender barriers. Weeks’ victory set a precedent for the many discrimination cases that would follow and advanced the larger fight for equality for women.

Early History of Employment Barriers

Women entered the workforce in the United States in the early 1800s, but with a lower status than men. Most were young and single and worked unskilled jobs or became teachers. By the 1920s, some women went to college and worked as secretaries or nurses. Organizations formed to better the low wages and unsafe working conditions for women. The Women’s Bureau and the Women’s Trade Union League sought to improve working conditions and welfare of women in the 1920s.¹

¹ *Gale Encyclopedia of U.S. Economic History*, s.v. “Women in the Workplace”. 2015 ed

During the Great Depression, more women entered the workforce than men as employers were willing to hire women at a lower wage. 11 million women were employed and many were accused of taking jobs from men. In the 1930s, the National Recovery Administration and the Works Progress Administration improved wages and working hours for women, although women had to prove they were the primary wage earner.² Laws such as the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 helped women by raising the minimum wage to 25 cents.³

Over the course of WWII, women's employment rose from 12 million in 1940 to 18 million in 1945. Women filled jobs that men left when going to war and helped produce products for the war, such as aircrafts, bombs, and tanks.⁴ Women also worked at telephone switchboards with oversea calls.⁵ Although women's contributions to the war effort were important, most returned to the household after the war ended and employers gave priority to men. This pattern of strict gender roles continued for the next 20 years, as society encouraged this unjust gender barrier in the workplace.⁶

Efforts to Break Barriers

By the 1960s, 13.97% of women participated in the workforce, mostly in secretarial jobs. Women encountered problems in equal pay, earning 60 percent of men's pay, and job stereotypes keeping them from higher paying positions.⁷

² *Gale Encyclopedia of U.S. Economic History*, s.v. "Women in the Workplace".

³ Spiggle, Tom. "Eight Laws That Helped Women Make History In The Workforce." *Forbes*, Forbes Magazine, 14 Mar. 2019 www.forbes.com/sites/tomspiggle/2019/03/13/8-laws-that-helped-women-make-history-in-the-workforce/#27608af917b5.

⁴ "Speech on Equal Pay and Women's Contribution to the War Effort." *DocsTeach*, 22 Feb. 1942, www.docsteach.org/documents/document/equal-pay-women-war-effort.

⁵ "Women Working at a Bell System Telephone Switchboard." *DocsTeach*, 22 Dec. 1943, www.docsteach.org/documents/document/bell-telephone-switchboard.

⁶ *Gale Encyclopedia of U.S. Economic History*, s.v. "Women in the Workplace".

⁷ *Gale Encyclopedia of U.S. Economic History*, s.v. "Women in the Workplace".

National movements took action during this time of change to stop discrimination. Marguerite Rawalt, Betty Friedan, and Kathryn Clarenback developed the National Organization for Women (NOW), because of the lack of help from the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC).⁸ The Equal Pay Act of 1963 prohibited, “discrimination on account of sex in the payment of wages by employers engaged in commerce or in the production of goods or commerce.”⁹ The Civil Rights Act of 1964, stating, “...to ensure equal employment opportunities for employees without discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin...” made gender discrimination illegal.¹⁰

Protective laws and stereotypes continued limiting access to jobs. State laws precluded women from working jobs that required them to carry over 12-13 pounds.¹¹ Stereotypes were another barrier. Job advertisements, segregated by gender (see Appendix A), kept women from certain occupations, such as insurance agents and salesmen.¹²

Weeks Faces Discrimination

Lorena Weeks entered this segregated workforce in the 1940s. She worked at the Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company in a traditionally female occupation since the age of 18.¹³ As an operator, Weeks hauled her 34 pound typewriter to work everyday (see Appendix B).¹⁴ After almost two decades of working with Southern Bell, on March 17, 1966,

⁸Kimberly Voss, *Women Politicking Politely*. (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2017). Print. 17

⁹“Equal Pay Act of 1963.” *DocsTeach*, 10 June 1963, www.docsteach.org/documents/document/equal-pay-act.

¹⁰“Civil Rights Act of 1964.” *DocsTeach*, 2 July 1964,

<https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/civil-rights-act-of-1964>

¹¹Weeks, Lorena. “Lorena Weeks interviewed by Kathleen Clark.” 9 Nov 2009. *Richard B. Russell Library Oral History Documentary Collection* <http://ohms.libs.uga.edu/viewer.php?cachefile=russell/RBRL175OHD-012.xml>

¹²“Gender Wage Gap Timeline.” *Timetoast*, 29 Nov. 1911, www.timetoast.com/timelines/gender-wage-gap

¹³Day, Meagan. “The Extraordinary Courage of an Ordinary Woman: Lorena Weeks Broke Barriers for Working Women.” *Medium*, Timeline, 1 June 2018, <https://timeline.com/lorena-weeks-women-work-5ec6dcc6ded9>.

¹⁴“Lorena Weeks with typewriter.” *Social Welfare History Image Portal* <https://images.socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/items/show/342>.

Weeks applied for a job as switchman, for its higher salary and locational convenience.¹⁵

Switchmen work with office equipment, test, power, frame, switch and telephone equipment.

The job required making adjustments and repairs easily done by women.

Southern Bell rejected Weeks' application on April 18, 1966. "They said they appreciated that I wanted to advance within the company, but the man is the breadwinner of the family and women just don't need this type of job."¹⁶ Weeks' response was, "Oh no! When I go through the grocery store, they don't push back a loaf of bread and say, 'Well you nice little lady, you can have this ten cents cheaper,' just because I'm a woman!"¹⁷

Weeks was qualified for the job by her seniority and experience and needed it because of family financial struggles. This position would also save her the current 40 minute trip to her operator job—a hardship for her family.¹⁸ Although the Equal Pay Act of 1963 was helping women, it was not helping Weeks or preventing women from being denied jobs in the first place.

Taking Action

A poster in the office of Southern Bell encouraged anyone facing discrimination to contact the EEOC. Weeks wrote to the EEOC, who responded:

The Commission has investigated...and found reasonable cause to believe that an unlawful employment practice within the meaning of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 has been committed. The Commission will attempt to eliminate this practice by conciliation.¹⁹

¹⁵Day, Meagan. "The Extraordinary Courage of an Ordinary Woman: Lorena Weeks Broke Barriers for Working Women."

¹⁶Day, Meagan. "The Extraordinary Courage of an Ordinary Woman: Lorena Weeks Broke Barriers for Working Women."

¹⁷"Southern Bell" www.pbs.org/video/makers-women-who-make-america-southern-bell/

¹⁸Federal Communications Commission Washington D.C., Lorena Weeks v. Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company, Lorena Weeks, 1969. Lorena Weeks File related to Weeks v. Southern Bell. Russell Library, University of Georgia. Print.

¹⁹Holbert, Kenneth F. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. "To Lorena Weeks." 21 Mar 1967. Letter. Lorena Weeks Files, Russell Library, University of Georgia.

Keith Macdonald of the EEOC met with Southern Bell to discuss why Weeks was denied the job. Southern Bell still refused to give her the job. Macdonald told Weeks she would have to go to court, but would risk losing her job.²⁰ On April 19, 1967, the EEOC advised her to file suit, and Weeks got an appointed attorney²¹ Counsel filed suit for Weeks on May 18.²² With help from the court, Weeks tenaciously continued her fight.

At the District Court, Southern Bell claimed that giving Weeks the job would be breaking the law.²³ Citing Georgia Rule 59 limiting weight carried on the job by women to 30 pounds, Southern Bell staged a picture of a switchman carrying the 31 pound time and test set on a ladder. In reality, this would never be done.²⁴ Bell also claimed that emergencies requiring the fire extinguisher--the same one used during Weeks' night shifts alone as an operator--or the generator (weighing 1,500-2,500 pounds) would necessitate lifting more than 30 pounds.

Although Henry Moore, the repair man, testified against Southern Bell's point about the generator, Judge Scarlet ruled against Weeks based on Georgia Rule 59. Leaving the courtroom, Weeks' bosses celebrated their victory. Weeks said, "I cried and cried, because I loved the telephone company, and was being taken advantage of."²⁵

Although Weeks lost in District Court, she was determined to fight for the promotion. Weeks staged her own protest by hand writing her reports. When questioned, she said she didn't want to violate Georgia Rule 59 by lifting her 34 pound typewriter. Bell suspended Weeks.²⁶

²⁰Springer, Eric W. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. "Notice of Right to Sue Within 30 Days." 19 April, 1967. Letter. Lorena Weeks Files, Russell Library, University of Georgia.

²¹"Lorena Weeks interviewed by Kathleen Clark"

²²Justia Law. Mrs. Lorena W. Weeks, Appellant, v. Southern Bell Telephone & Telegraph Company

²³Federal Communications Commission Washington D.C., Lorena Weeks v. Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company, Lorena Weeks, 1969.

²⁴Day, Meagan. "The Extraordinary Courage of an Ordinary Woman: Lorena Weeks Broke Barriers for Working Women."

²⁵"Lorena Weeks interviewed by Kathleen Clark"

²⁶"Lorena Weeks interviewed by Kathleen Clark"

Weeks filed a grievance against the company (see Appendix C). Bell awarded her the back pay, but threatened, “future refusals of work assignments would not be tolerated and would result in serious disciplinary action.”²⁷ However Weeks’ determination and changing philosophies of the 1960s empowered her to go on.

Support from the Women’s Movement

During this time, activists continued to fight for equal rights, Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique*,²⁸ and NOW was making progress.²⁹ NOW was a growing national influence and was willing to take Weeks’ case because of the injustices in employment. Marguerite Rawalt, a NOW attorney, contacted Weeks and offered help. She connected Weeks with attorney Sylvia Roberts. Roberts was determined to help Weeks get the job.³⁰

Weeks and Roberts took the case to the Appellate level. They brought in the time and test set—which was half the size of Lorena’s typewriter³¹—and had Roberts lift them easily.³² Southern Bell said women wouldn’t be able to handle emergencies, which was easily refuted with Title VII, stating, “Women are now to be on equal footing.”³³ As Georgia Rule 59 was repealed, Southern Bell’s support crumbled.³⁴ Three judges ruled in favor of Weeks on March

²⁷Communications Workers of America. Response to Grievance Between Communications Workers of America and Southern Bell Telephone & Telegraph Company." 68-26-084. 25 Feb 1969. Lorena Weeks Files, Russell Library, University of Georgia.

²⁸*Gale Encyclopedia of U.S. Economic History*, s.v. “Women in the Workplace”

²⁹Voss, *Women Politicking Politely*, 17

³⁰O'Neill, Terry. “Some History Behind Women’s History Month.” *HuffPost*, HuffPost, 11 May 2014, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/some-history-behind-women_b_4941835.

³¹“Typewriter and Time and Test Set” Lorena Weeks File related to Weeks v. Southern Bell. Russell Library, University of Georgia. Print.

³²“Lorena Weeks interviewed by Kathleen Clark”

³³Frost-Knappman and Cullen-Du Pont, *Women’s Rights on Trial*, 368

³⁴Justia Law. Mrs. Lorena W. Weeks, Appellant, v. Southern Bell Telephone & Telegraph Company

28, 1969, and Judge Bell told Southern Bell to give Weeks the job.³⁵ With support from the women's movement, Weeks prevailed.

Facing Continued Resistance

Weeks went back to work, but Southern Bell wouldn't give her the job as switchman, so NOW continued to help. "I am appalled to learn that six years after filing her charge of discrimination, and two years after her favorable court decision, Ms. Weeks has still not become a 'switchman,'" wrote Aileen Hernandez, president of NOW, "Southern Bell has thrown roadblock after roadblock in Ms. Weeks' path—all because she challenged an illogical practice of your company."³⁶ However, it took court action for Southern Bell to concede.

Judge Bell returned seven months after the court ruling to see Weeks, not knowing she hadn't been given the job. He went to Southern Bell and a manager said, "You women and minorities are not going to tear up this telephone company," and refused to give Weeks the job.³⁷ Judge Bell made a court order that forced Southern Bell to give Weeks the job along with \$31,000 in back pay and she began working as a switchman.

The supervisors made it hard for Weeks. They locked her out of the building on her first day, gave her sunglasses to wear so she couldn't see anything in the dim room, and gave her wire-cutters that cut her hands. Even under harassment, Weeks kept going because she loved her job and for 13 more years she continued as a switchman.³⁸

³⁵"Lorena Weeks interviewed by Kathleen Clark"

³⁶Hernandez Aileen C. "to Frank M. Malone" 18 February 1971. Letter. Lorena Weeks' Files related to Weeks v. Southern Bell. Russell Library, University of Georgia. Print.

³⁷"Lorena Weeks interviewed by Kathleen Clark"

³⁸"Lorena Weeks interviewed by Kathleen Clark"

Continuing to Break Barriers

Lorena Weeks continued to break barriers for women in the workplace by joining NOW. She was also active with the Federal Communications Commission in Washington D.C.³⁹ She gave momentum to the women's movement and was recognized as a woman who "has remained firm and... will continue to seek justice for herself and the thousands of other women who might assume, in the future, that the laws against sex discrimination are meant to be enforced."⁴⁰

In 1972, Weeks testified in EEOC, Hodgson, and U.S. v. AT&T, fighting continued unjust practices toward women. Weeks gave a forthright, effective testimony against the "Bell Monolith" called "The largest oppressor of women workers in the U.S."⁴¹ This case, along with the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, gained reparations and new policies for thousands of women employed in the telephone company who lost promotions because of gender.⁴² The Bell System was forced to conform to an agreement that offered equal opportunity to both men and women and is an "immensely important milestone in equal opportunity... that will produce similar agreements in other industries."⁴³ Weeks' fortitude led to a larger change in the company, with support from the EEOC and the courts.

Southern Bell detailed these changes in their Equal Opportunity pamphlet of 1973:

Times change, the expectations and aspirations of people change, and the customs of our society and our business change. So now the emphasis is on providing greater

³⁹"Lorena Weeks interviewed by Kathleen Clark"

⁴⁰ Hernandez Aileen C. "to Frank M. Malone" 18 February 1971. Letter. Lorena Weeks' Files related to Weeks v. Southern Bell. Russell Library, University of Georgia. Print.

⁴¹Copus, D., Gartner, L. et al. "A Unique Competence: A Study in the Equal Employment Opportunity in the Bell System" Papers of Marjorie Stockford, Civil Rights Litigation Clearing House: University of Michigan. 17 Feb. 1972. https://www.clearinghouse.net/chDocs/not_public/EE-PA-0227-0004.pdf

⁴²"Equal Opportunity Employment Commission." Legal Information Institute: Cornell Law School. N.d. https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/equal_employment_opportunity_commission

⁴³Sampson, Arthur. "An Agreement Between GSA and AT&T. Papers of Marjorie Stockford, Civil Rights Litigation Clearing House: University of Michigan. 20 Sept. 1972. https://www.clearinghouse.net/chDocs/not_public/EE-PA-0227-0030.pdf

opportunities for qualified women and minority group members to move upward in our organization.⁴⁴

Southern Bell improved testing and promotion plans based on more logical qualifications. They helped women by creating equality in wages and hiring.

Not only did Southern Bell change, but Weeks' court case inspired people to recognize the injustices in certain job qualifications. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, the justice system and the success of the Weeks case invalidated laws concerning weight lifting. *The New York Times* reported:

Federal Courts across the nation have unloosed a stream of decisions in recent months that appear to be on their way toward wiping out all state laws that prohibit women from working in certain types of jobs...and decrease their opportunities for promotion.⁴⁵

Weeks' persistent fight encouraged other women. Southern Bell later wrote, "The example you have set for other women at the telephone company is an inspiration," and went on to say how her testimony would hopefully open doors for women in equal pay and opportunity.

Weeks' success continued to advance women's equality, serving as a reference in court cases such as McDonnell Douglas v. Green in 1973 concerning job qualifications⁴⁶ and in Long v. SAPP in 1974 concerning ability over gender.⁴⁷ The Dothard v. Rawlinson trial in 1977 eliminated the height and weight standards for females with the help of Weeks' case,⁴⁸ and one

⁴⁴Southern Bell. *Equal Opportunity on Southern Bell; Employee's guide to Equal Opportunity Agreement With the Federal Government*. 1973. Lorena Weeks File related to Weeks v. Southern Bell. Russell Library, University of Georgia. Print.

⁴⁵Shanahan, Eileen. "Women's Job Rights Gain in Federal Court Rulings." *The New York Times*, 13 July 1971, pp. 1-37. <http://ezproxy.hclib.org/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.hclib.org/docview/119072654?accountid=6743>.

⁴⁶Kenneth W. Kingma, Sex Discrimination Justified Under Title VII: Privacy Rights in Nursing Homes, 14 Val. U. L. Rev. 577 (1980). <http://scholar.valpo.edu/vulr/vol14/iss3/6>

⁴⁷Dowler, April, "Pregnancy and Hiring Discrimination", 83 W. Va. L. Rev. (1981). <https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/wvlr/vol83/iss3/9>

⁴⁸Frost-Knappman and Cullen-Du Pont, *Women's Rights on Trial*, 368

lawyer told Weeks that he used her name in his cases several times a week.⁴⁹ Weeks' case became the standard in determining just labor qualifications.⁵⁰

Weeks' trial also influenced the pivotal case of Lilly Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. in 2009. After Ledbetter discovered she was earning less money than her male colleagues, she went to court. The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009 now ensures equal pay. Weeks and Ledbetter are called 'soul sisters' for their desire and persistent fight to improve gender equality in employment.⁵¹ Through perseverance and support from both NOW and the justice system, Weeks initiated a movement leading others to equal opportunity.

Broken Barriers

Weeks broke the barrier against protective labor laws. The women that followed continued to confront the dividing line limiting advancement based on gender stereotypes. The participation for women professionals gradually rose, with the largest jump between 1966 to 1972, during the time of Weeks' fight (see Appendix D).⁵² Women like Long, Rawlinson, and Ledbetter used the support of the EEOC, the courts, and the women's movement to continue to blur gender employment lines. Weeks set a precedent for women in the professional fields; however, room for growth remains.

Women still encounter barriers today. Women receive unequal pay, with the median pay for women 80% of the median pay for men.⁵³ Women experience harassment in the workplace, fewer promotions, and struggles in finding a balance between children and work. They also face

⁴⁹"Lorena Weeks interviewed by Kathleen Clark"

⁵⁰ Werne, Benjamin. A Guide to the Law of Fair Employment, 10 U. Rich. L. Rev. 209 (1976). <http://scholarship.richmond.edu/lawreview/vol10/iss2/2>. Ebook.(p.230)

⁵¹Collins, Gail. "Lilly's Big Day." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 29 Jan. 2009,

⁵²"*Women in the Workforce.*" *U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission*

⁵³*Gale Encyclopedia of U.S. Economic History*, s.v. "Women in the Workplace"

bias in leadership roles, as they are often seen negatively.⁵⁴ "A lot of women... in leadership positions will be able to empathize with having experienced barriers. It's rare to find a woman leader who's never experienced any form of inequality," said Michelle King, an advocate for advancing gender equality in the workplace.⁵⁵ Only 17% of CEO positions are held by females, and just 27% hold Vice Presidential occupations.⁵⁶ Women are confronting these challenges by pursuing organizational changes in the workforce and working to create a positive work culture.

Women today continue to follow the groundwork for equality laid by Weeks. Sheryl Vogt, the director of the Russell Library describes Weeks as, "truly one of the unknown heroes of the Women's Movement. She is unassuming in demeanor but possesses the strong sense of right versus wrong and was unwilling to accept blatant discrimination from her longtime employer, a company for which she still expresses a loyalty today. We deeply appreciate her persistent courage to take that step forward for women."⁵⁷

⁵⁴"The Top Five Issues for Working Women Around the World." *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company,

⁵⁵"Are You Being Treated Unfairly at Work Because of Your Gender?" *Harvard Business Review*, 25 Feb. 2020, hbr.org/podcast/2019/12/gender-equality-issues.

⁵⁶Zimmerman, Kaytie. "What Gender Barriers Do Millennial Women Face In The Workplace?" *Forbes*, Forbes Magazine, 18 Aug. 2016, www.forbes.com/sites/kaytiezimmerman/2016/08/18/what-gender-barriers-do-millennial-women-face-in-the-workplace/#318a7e1a604c.

⁵⁷"Trailblazer for Equity in the Workplace, Lorena Weeks, Featured in New PBS Series." *UGA Today*, 12 Dec. 2017, <https://news.uga.edu/trailblazer-for-equity-in-the-workplace-lorena-weeks-featured-in-new-p/>.

Appendix A

WANTED—MALE HELP.

Salesmen.

WANTED—A MAN TO SELL A SPECIALTY; one who has experience in the wholesale grocery line preferred. Address T 110, Tribune office.

WANTED—A FIRST-CLASS CITY CIGAR SALESMAN; a good opening for the right man. Address T 101, Tribune office.

WANTED—EXPERIENCED COFFEE AND SPICE salesmen in Wisconsin, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Ohio. Address, with full particulars, T 104, Tribune office.

WANTED—SALESMEN—GOOD—TO SELL AN entirely new article; also, good advertising solicitors. 603 Manhattan Building, Dearborn-st.

WANTED—A THOROUGHLY COMPETENT AND experienced grocery salesman, well posted in imported and domestic fancy groceries and favorably known to the trade of St. Paul, Minneapolis, Duluth, etc.; none but first-class men, possessing the requisite experience and ability, need apply. AUSTIN, NICHOLS & CO., Importers and Wholesale Grocers, New York.

WANTED—A MAN OF EXPERIENCE, OR, BETTER, one who is willing to be instructed, to sell Chicago lots at terms and prices that will warrant a ready sale; must give good reference. S. A. CRAIG & CO., 184 Dearborn-st.

WANTED—TWO GOOD TRAVELING MEN FOR wholesale jewelry establishment; trade preferred. Call Monday 210 and 212 Madison-st.

WANTED—FIRST-CLASS TRAVELING MEN with reliable houses to carry a side line; good sellers and for cash at 40 per cent profit; only reliable parties need apply. Address T 16, Tribune.

Solicitors and Canvassers.

WANTED—LIFE INSURANCE SOLICITORS who can give references from banker; can make liberal contract for city work. Write BANKERS' LIFE ASSOCIATION of Des Moines, Ia., by

WANTED—FEMALE HELP.

Bookkeepers and Clerks.

WANTED—A YOUNG LADY WHO IS A thorough and expert bookkeeper and accountant; no attention paid to answers that do not give full particulars and salary expected. Address O 68, Tribune office.

WANTED—BRIGHT, INTELLIGENT YOUNG lady who writes well and rapidly; work is mostly copying; state age and salary expected. Address T 17, Tribune office.

WANTED—IN MACHINE STORE, A BRIGHT young Swedish or German girl. 5629 Wentworth-av.

WANTED—AN EXPERIENCED LADY BOOKKEEPER; permanent position; small salary; state experience and salary required. P 90, Tribune.

WANTED—LADY CASHIER AND BOOKKEEPER, grocery. 229 26th-st.

WANTED—LADY (D. E.) BOOKKEEPER AND stenographer; must be competent and willing to work for low salary to start; answer in own handwriting. Address S 164, Tribune office.

WANTED—EXPERIENCED LADY BOOKKEEPER; one familiar with jewelry business preferred. Address O 103, Tribune office.

Stenographers.

WANTED—A COMPETENT LADY STENOGRAPHER of good business capacity for position in lumber office in pleasantly located lumber manufacturing town in Missouri; one who can and is willing to help in bookkeeping and general office work; must be a dignified, moral, quiet, and sensible lady, always able to do a day's work, and who can give references; brains and business tact prized above great speed as stenographer; steady position and good salary to right party. Address, giving age, experience, and salary expected, D C 27, Tribune office.

Job advertisement in newspaper, Jan. 8, 1950, Timecoast: Timeline in Business

Appendix B



Lorena Weeks with typewriter, ca. 1963-1968, Newcomb Archives: Tulane University

Appendix C

RECORD OF GRIEVANCE
Between
COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA
and
SOUTHERN BELL TELEPHONE & TELEGRAPH COMPANY

SERIAL NUMBER
68-26-084
TO BE ASSIGNED BY
STATE DIRECTOR

1. Grievance Occurred (a) 10-27-67 (b) Georgia (c) 3207
Date State (Swainsboro) No.
 (d) _____ (e) _____ (f) Millen, Ga.
Department *Title involved (if applicable) Specific Location

2. **Grieving Employee or Work Group Involved. (a) Lorena Weeks
Name of employee or work group
 (b) (Plant) (c) (Os. P. Clk.) (d) (1-12-53) (e) (9-9-52)
Department Job title N. C. S. Date Seniority Date

3. Union's Statement of What Happened Unfair suspension .

4. Specific Basis of Grievance or Section of Contract Involved Articles 11, 18, 21, and all applicable sections with the true intent and meaning of each.

5. (a) Grievance filed 11-18-67 (b) Originated E. S. Hilliard
Date Union Representative
 Delivered by hand 2-11-68

6. Company's Statement of What Happened The grieving party stated she would not and refused to pull her typewriter from her desk to perform her normal typing duties as an outside plant clerk. The typewriter was inside a typical desk on a roll-away swivel platform. The grieving party was suspended one day for failure to perform normal job duties.

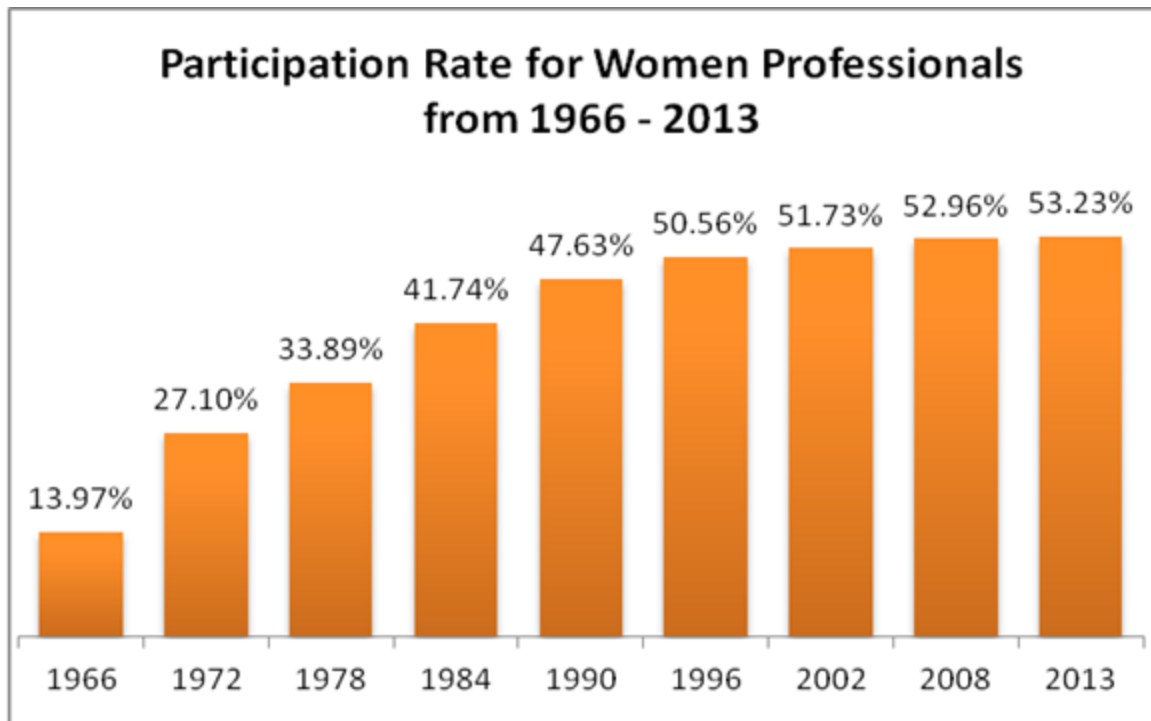
7. Proposed Disposition _____

Signed _____
Company Representative Date

8. Accepted _____ Rejected _____ Appealed _____

Weeks' Grievance, October 27, 1967, Lorena Weeks' Files
related to Weeks v. Southern Bell: Russell Library, University of Georgia.

Appendix D



“Women in the Workforce,” U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Annotated Bibliography

PRIMARY SOURCES:

“Civil Rights Act of 1964.” *DocsTeach*, 2 July 1964,

**<https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/civil-rights-act-of-1964> [Accessed
16 Dec. 2019].**

This source provided me with the original document of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. I was able to learn more about how this Act helped break barriers for women in the workforce by giving women the same opportunities in employment as men, through the rights this document stated for working women.

Copus, D., Gartner, L. et al. “A Unique Competence: A Study in the Equal Employment Opportunity in the Bell System” (As reprinted in the Congressional Record). Papers of Marjorie Stockford, Civil Rights Litigation Clearing House: University of Michigan. 17 Feb. 1972.

**https://www.clearinghouse.net/chDocs/not_public/EE-PA-0227-0004.pdf [Accessed
14 May 2020].**

This record explained the EEOC, Hodgson, and U.S. v. AT&T case as well as the discrimination that so many women faced, working in the telephone company. Weeks continued her fight by testifying in this case, and was a part of a movement that was so much bigger and affected so many women who had faced discrimination, like Weeks.

Communications Workers of America. "Record of Grievance Between Communications

Workers of America and Southern Bell Telephone & Telegraph Company." 68-26-084. 25 Feb 1969. Lorena Weeks File related to Weeks v. Southern Bell. Russell Library, University of Georgia. Print.

After Weeks was suspended from work, she filed a complaint to the Communications Workers of America, and this was the original document of that grievance. This was very helpful to me, by allowing me to share more about Weeks' story through the image of this document.

Communications Workers of America. Response to Grievance Between Communications

Workers of America and Southern Bell Telephone & Telegraph Company." 68-26-084. 25 Feb 1969. Lorena Weeks Files, Russell Library, University of Georgia.

This was the response of Weeks' grievance from Southern Bell, and was very interesting to see the threatening tone of this writing and Weeks' handwritten notes on this letter, stating that "they were building a case against me". I was able to look into what Weeks must have felt and could better comprehend her burning desire for this job.

Dowler, April, Pregnancy and Hiring Discrimination, 83 W. Va. L. Rev. (1981). Available at: <https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/wvlr/vol83/iss3/9> [Accessed 6 Nov. 2019].

This review helped me by showing the short-term impact of Lorena Weeks' court case and the barriers that she broke. It gave examples of court cases that quoted the Weeks v. Southern Bell trial and in what way the trial was used for the court case that was quoting it.

“Equal Pay Act of 1963.” *DocsTeach*, 10 June 1963,

www.docsteach.org/documents/document/equal-pay-act. [Accessed 16 Dec. 2019].

This was the original document of the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and was helpful to me, because I could quote sections of it relating to women’s rights involving wages.

Federal Communications Commission Washington D.C., Lorena Weeks v. Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company, Lorena Weeks, 1969. Lorena Weeks File related to Weeks v. Southern Bell. Russell Library, University of Georgia. Print.

This was the testimony of Lorena Weeks explaining her motives and fight for the job. I was able to learn more about what happened in the District and Appellate Courts. The point of view from which it was written really opened my eyes to the ridiculousness of Georgia Rule 59 and changed my understanding of the many barriers women faced.

“Gender Wage Gap Timeline.” *Timetoast*, 8 Jan. 1950,

www.timetoast.com/timelines/gender-wage-gap. [Accessed 24 Feb. 2020].

I understood the injustice in employment in the 1950/60s through this poster which identified a huge barrier of gender stereotypes by showing jobs that were advertised by gender and not ability. I, personally, was really brought to the time period and could feel the lack of fairness some women must have felt by being denied the opportunity for a job because of their gender.

Hernandez Aileen C. "to Frank M. Malone" 18 February 1971. Letter. Lorena Weeks' Files related to Weeks v. Southern Bell. Russell Library, University of Georgia. Print.

NOW wrote a letter to Southern Bell because of the harassment towards Lorena Weeks after she won the case. This letter was extremely helpful to me in order to show the connection between Weeks and NOW and how Weeks played a part in the bigger picture of discrimination against women.

Holbert, Kenneth F. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. "To Lorena Weeks." 21 Mar 1967. Letter. Lorena Weeks Files, Russell Library, University of Georgia.

Written in response to Weeks' complaint, this was the original letter written to Lorena Weeks, from the EEOC, informing her about the commission's investigation in her issue. It was beneficial, as well as interesting, for me to be able to see the correspondence of Weeks and the EEOC, and added a lot to my understanding of Weeks' story.

Justia Law. *Mrs. Lorena W. Weeks, Appellant, v. Southern Bell Telephone & Telegraph Company, Appellee.* *southern Bell Telephone & Telegraph Company, Appellant, v. Mrs. Lorena W. Weeks, Appellee, 408 F.2d 228 (5th Cir. 1969).* [online] Available at:<https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/appellate-courts/F2/408/228/450803/> [Accessed 22 Sep. 2019].

This is the opinion issued by the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals that ruled in favor of Weeks. It had all of the legal dates and events of the Weeks v. Southern Bell trial. It was useful to me so I could create a better timeline of what happened and understand Southern Bell's actions and view on the whole trial.

Leo Kanowitz, Sex-Based Discrimination in American Law III: Title VII of the 1964 Civil

Rights Act and the Equal Pay Act of 1963, 20 Hastings L.J. 305 (1968). Available at: https://repository.uchastings.edu/hastings_law_journal/vol20/iss1/8 [Accessed 16 Apr. 2020].

Written in 1968, this report explained the extreme stereotypes of the 1960s and allowed me to understand the type of world in which women had to live. With such a huge difference in male and female jobs at the time, it was easy to understand Weeks' desire for a male-dominated job and the trouble she faced.

Lorena Weeks v Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company. 6-6-5487. Equal

Employment Opportunity Commission. 8 Mar 1967. Lorena Weeks File related to Weeks v. Southern Bell. Russell Library, University of Georgia. Print.

This was the overview of the EEOC's investigation of Weeks' charge. It was helpful for me to see these legal papers of the charge and was interesting to see the first steps of this three year process for Lorena Weeks.

“Lorena Weeks with typewriter,” *Social Welfare History Image Portal,*

<https://images.socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/items/show/342>. [Accessed 29 Oct. 2019].

Taken between 1963-1968, this was a picture of Lorena Weeks, in her workplace, holding a typewriter. This helped me understand how exactly Lorena Weeks was fighting for her case by using her typewriter in court. It showed me how easy it was for women to

carry objects over 30 pounds and how the law keeping women from getting jobs that require them to lift a certain amount was unnecessary and ridiculous.

Roerden, Chris. *National Organization for Women*. 1977,

https://www.si.edu/object/nmah_518631 [Accessed 6 Nov. 2019].

Created in the 1970s, this drawing gave a clear timeline of what was going on in NOW during the time of Weeks' trial. It gave me some context to what else was happening in the women's movement and also noted some main events from Weeks v. Southern Bell, showing that it really did have an impact and affected NOW.

Sampson, Arthur. "An Agreement Between GSA and AT&T. Papers of Marjorie Stockford,

Civil Rights Litigation Clearing House: University of Michigan. 20 Sept. 1972.

https://www.clearinghouse.net/chDocs/not_public/EE-PA-0227-0030.pdf [Accessed 14 May 2020].

This agreement, that guaranteed equal opportunity, was a "milestone" in employment equality. Weeks' testimony helped lead to this agreement and her support in the larger fight for her fellow women workers at the telephone company made a lasting impact, on not only one person but many women in the workforce.

Shanahan, Eileen, Special to The New York Times. "Women's Job Rights Gain in

Federal Court Rulings: Women's Job Rights Gain in U.S. Court Rulings Against

State Restrictions." *New York Times (1923-Current file)*, Jul 13, 1971, pp. 1.

***ProQuest*, <http://ezproxy.hclib.org/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.hc>**

lib.org/docview/119072654?accountid=6743. [Accessed 28 Jan. 2020].

Written in 1971, this newspaper article was about the protective labor laws that were changed in order to better the equality in the workplace. Weeks' case was mentioned as a main court case that helped support this cause and it was really cool to see the direct impact of the Weeks v. Southern Bell court cases.

Shapiro, Harvey D. "Women on the Line, Men at the Switchboard: Equal Employment Opportunity Comes to the Bell System Dial E.E.O. Coed 411 the Liberated Switchboard." *New York Times (1923-Current file)*, May 20, 1973, pp. 280. *ProQuest*. 2020.<http://ezproxy.hclib.org/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.hclib.org/docview/119893840?accountid=6743>. [Accessed 14 May].

This newspaper article showed the impact of the EEOC, Hodgson, and U.S. v. AT&T case, by displaying the public's support in non-discriminatory employment. This movement in the telephone company was huge, as it employed many women and the impact it had on other industries was anticipated.

Southern Bell. *Equal Opportunity on Southern Bell; Employee's guide to Equal Opportunity Agreement With the Federal Government*. 1973. Lorena Weeks File related to Weeks v. Southern Bell. Russell Library, University of Georgia. Print.

This pamphlet, published in 1973, a few years after the Weeks v. Southern Bell trial, was very beneficial to me because it showed Weeks' impact on Southern Bell and the change that took place in Southern Bell after the case.

“Southern Bell.” *PBS, Public Broadcasting Service, 2013*

www.pbs.org/video/makers-women-who-make-america-southern-bell/. [Accessed 24 Oct. 2019].

With original footage as well as small interviews with Lorena Weeks and her lawyer, Sylvia Roberts, this video showed the impact of Lorena Weeks’ trial on NOW, by giving them momentum to prove that women were capable, and showed how she helped the general fight for equal gender employment rights.

“Speech on Equal Pay and Women's Contribution to the War Effort.” *DocsTeach, 22 Feb.*

1942, www.docsteach.org/documents/document/equal-pay-women-war-effort. [Accessed 19 Jan. 2019].

This speech, given in 1942 by Mary Anderson, the director of the Labor Women’s Bureau, was very helpful to me by giving me information about women in the workforce during WWII. It helped me understand the efforts of working women and their many contributions to the war effort through their labor.

Springer, Eric W. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. "Notice of Right to Sue Within 30 Days." 19 April, 1967. Letter. Lorena Weeks Files, Russell Library, University of Georgia.

Written to Lorena Weeks, from the EEOC, this was the letter Weeks received informing her about her right to take her case to the court. I was able to see more of the legal side of this process and was able to better understand what Weeks had to face.

“Typewriter and Time and Test Set” Lorena Weeks File related to Weeks v. Southern Bell.

Russell Library, University of Georgia. Print.

This picture, taken sometime during Weeks’ fight, was of Lorena Weeks’ typewriter compared to the time and test set that the switchman had to use. It was fascinating to see this image because of the comparison of the two objects, not differentiating much in size. It helped support the fact that these protective labor laws were extremely ridiculous.

Weeks, Lorena. "Lorena Weeks interviewed by Kathleen Clark." 9 Nov 2009. *Richard B.*

Russell Library Oral History Documentary Collection, OHD 012. University of Georgia. Web. [Accessed 12 Oct. 2019].

<http://ohms.libs.uga.edu/viewer.php?cachefile=russell/RBRL175OHD-012.xml>

This video interview, by Kathleen Clark, with Lorena Weeks gave me a lot of important information about the events that happened and the effect it had on Lorena Weeks. This was one of my favorite sources because it helped me get to know Weeks and the other people involved in the court cases and gave me a lot of important, but smaller, details that other sources didn’t have.

Werne, Benjamin. *A Guide to the Law of Fair Employment*, 10 U. Rich. L. Rev. 209 (1976).

<http://scholarship.richmond.edu/lawreview/vol10/iss2/2>. Ebook. [Accessed 19 May 2020].

This review, concerning fair employment, showed the impact Weeks had on employment and qualification standards. Weeks' case was so important that it became the standard

when determining fair qualifications. It showed me how her trial affected so many other people and was a part of a much larger fight to conquer the discrimination she and thousands of other women experienced.

“Women Working at a Bell System Telephone Switchboard.” *DocsTeach*, 22 Dec. 1943, www.docsteach.org/documents/document/bell-telephone-switchboard. [Accessed 19 Jan. 2019].

This picture showed women working at a telephone switchboard during WWII. It showed me how many women were working and helped me better understand the roles/occupations of women in telephone companies.

SECONDARY SOURCES:

“Are You Being Treated Unfairly at Work Because of Your Gender?” *Harvard Business Review*, 25 Feb. 2020, hbr.org/podcast/2019/12/gender-equality-issues. [Accessed 25 Feb. 2020].

This podcast transcript focused on the issues of unequal employment nowadays. I was able to better understand the roadblocks women face in today's society in the workplace and was able to see how 50 years later, women are still encountering huge issues in Equality.

“Equal Opportunity Employment Commission.” *Legal Information Institute: Cornell Law*

School. N.d. [Web] [Accessed May 14, 2020].

https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/equal_employment_opportunity_commission

This law, prohibiting discrimination in employment opportunity, helped overcome the gender barrier in the workforce during the 1960s and 70s. It extended the Civil Rights act of 1964, as there was still discrimination in the workforce 8 years after the act was passed. It helped ensure equal opportunity for women in the workforce.

Collins, Gail. "Lilly's Big Day." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 29 Jan. 2009,

<https://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/29/opinion/29collins.html>. [Accessed 8 Jan. 2019].

By showing the direct impact of the Weeks v. Southern Bell trial and the barriers Weeks overcame, this website was very helpful to me. It gave me more information on the Lilly Ledbetter v. Goodyear case and how Weeks' case helped Ledbetter and inspired women activists.

Day, Meagan. "The Extraordinary Courage of an Ordinary Woman: Lorena Weeks Broke

Barriers for Working Women." *Medium*, Timeline, 1 June 2018,

<https://timeline.com/lorena-weeks-women-work-5ec6dcc6ded9>. [Accessed 9 Sep. 2019].

As a great general overview, this web article first introduced me to the topic and gave me the basics of what happened to Lorena Weeks and how she fought to break barriers in women's employment in the 1960s. It showed Lorena Weeks' boldness and

determination in her struggle for gender employment equality, without much support from others.

Frost-Knappman, Elizabeth, and Kathryn Cullen-Du Pont. *Women's Rights on Trial: 101 Historic Trials from Anne Hutchinson to the Virginia Military Institute Cadets*. Gale, 1997. [Accessed 24 Oct. 2019].

By giving me straightforward facts and dates, this book was very helpful to me because I knew it was reliable. It gave some more information about the trial itself, like the lawyers and other people involved in the trial. It was very useful to me and confirmed the facts that I was already given.

Hedreen, Siri. "The Dangers of Gendered Jobs." *Business News Daily*, 14 Aug. 2019, www.businessnewsdaily.com/10085-male-female-dominated-jobs.html. [Accessed 16 Apr. 2020].

This article, on gender stereotypes today, helped me really see the line between men and women when it comes to the workplace. The article showed some improvement, but it was clearly visible that the way certain jobs are perceived, are really what is holding people back from getting specific jobs.

Kenneth W. Kingma, *Sex Discrimination Justified Under Title VII: Privacy Rights in Nursing Homes*, 14 Val. U. L. Rev. 577 (1980). Available at: <http://scholar.valpo.edu/vulr/vol14/iss3/6> [Accessed 6 Nov. 2019].

This review gave me a court case, occurring shortly after Weeks' case, that was affected by the Weeks v. Southern Bell trial after quoting it. It was important to show the impact of Lorena Weeks' stand and helped me understand in what ways other cases were using Weeks' trial.

O'Neill, Terry. "Some History Behind Women's History Month." *HuffPost*, HuffPost, 11 May 2014, [Accessed 22 Sep. 2019].

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/some-history-behind-women_b_4941835.

Terry O'Neill (former president of NOW) wrote an article that was helpful to me because it gave context to the event and what other movements were being taken for the fight for gender equality. It had significant dates involving NOW and other movements that helped me better understand the time period and context of the Weeks vs. Southern Bell court cases.

Spiggle, Tom. "Eight Laws That Helped Women Make History In The Workforce." *Forbes*, Forbes Magazine, 14 Mar. 2019,

www.forbes.com/sites/tomspiggle/2019/03/13/8-laws-that-helped-women-make-history-in-the-workforce/#27608af917b5. [Accessed 24 Oct. 2019].

This website article talked about the different laws that changed how women were viewed in society and in the workforce. It explained each law and how it affected the job opportunities for women and how each law led to another based off of how it changed (or didn't change) employment discrimination.

Stockford, M.A. *The Bellwomen: The Story of the Landmark AT&T Sex Discrimination*

Case. Rutgers University Press: Chicago. 2004 [ebook]. [Accessed 13 May 2020].

This book, explaining the milestone case against AT&T's unjust employment practices, was helpful in showing how Weeks was a part of this larger movement and how her simple testimony of the discrimination she experienced helped the EEOC win the case.

“The Top Five Issues for Working Women Around the World.” *The Atlantic*, Atlantic

Media Company,

www.theatlantic.com/sponsored/thomson-reuters-davos/the-top-five-issues-for-working-women-around-the-world/762/. [Accessed 16 May. 2020].

After reading this article I was more aware of the issues that women still face in the workforce. Although women have come a long way in the workforce by gaining better pay, opportunity, and working conditions, barriers still remain. Women still struggle with many problems, but are working toward a better workplace for all.

“Trailblazer for Equity in the Workplace, Lorena Weeks, Featured in New PBS Series.”

***UGA Today*, 12 Dec. 2017,**

<https://news.uga.edu/trailblazer-for-equity-in-the-workplace-lorena-weeks-featured-in-new-p/>. [Accessed 22 Oct. 2019].

This website gave me some new information about the impact of Lorena Weeks and led me to a video that was helpful as well. This website confirmed a few of my facts and showed how Lorena Weeks changed women's employment in her time as well as now.

Voss, Kimberly. *Women Politicking Politely*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2017. Print.

Kimberly Voss' book, *Women Politicking Politely*, was about women who impacted women's rights and what they did to do that. It helped me understand what else was going on at the time besides Weeks' trial. I got to learn more about other people who were involved in breaking barriers in women's rights and how they did so.

"Women in the Workforce." U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/statistics/reports/american_experiences/women.cfm. [Accessed 6 Nov. 2019].

This website provided me with many statistics on the percentages of women in the workplace from 1966-2013. I was surprised to see that the biggest jump was between 1966 and 1972, showing that Weeks' case and other events between that time helped encouraged more women to enter the workforce.

Women in the Workplace." *Gale Encyclopedia of U.S. Economic History*, edited by Thomas

Riggs, 2nd ed., vol. 3, Gale, 2015, pp. 1477-1479. *Gale In Context: High School*,

<https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CX3611000989/SUIC?u=mnsminitex&sid=SUIC&xid=17a40bff>. [Accessed 24 Oct. 2019].

After reading this article I got a better understanding of what job opportunities looked like for women before and after the 1960s. I was given clear eras that were significant to the women's rights movement and what happened during those times. It also gave me a lot of statistics that really put things into perspective and made it clear of the barrier and

the effect of the women's rights movements in the 1960s, including the Weeks vs. Southern Bell trial.

Zimmerman, Kaytie. "What Gender Barriers Do Millennial Women Face In The Workplace?" *Forbes*, Forbes Magazine, 18 Aug. 2016, www.forbes.com/sites/kaytiezimmerman/2016/08/18/what-gender-barriers-do-millennial-women-face-in-the-workplace/#318a7e1a604c. [Accessed 25 Feb. 2020].

This website addressed the issue of how women in the workforce are not viewed as capable in leadership positions. It displayed some shocking statistics about this and I learned more about issues in today's world, even though working women have come a long way.