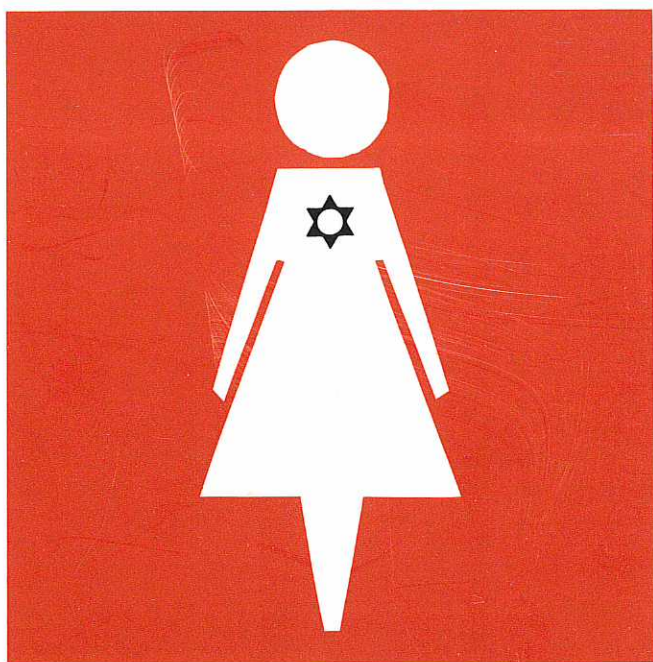


# the status of women in jewish organizations of greater pittsburgh



SURVEY SPONSORED BY

**The American Jewish Committee**

PITTSBURGH CHAPTER

**National Council of Jewish Women**

PITTSBURGH SECTION

**APRIL • 1980**

**THE STATUS OF WOMEN  
IN  
JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS  
OF  
GREATER PITTSBURGH**

The Pittsburgh Chapter of the American Jewish Committee gratefully acknowledges  
the support of the Maurice Falk Medical Fund for the publication of this report

©Copyright 1980  
American Jewish Committee  
National Council of Jewish Women

A survey sponsored by  
**The American Jewish Committee, Pittsburgh Chapter**  
and  
**National Council of Jewish Women, Pittsburgh Section**

Report Prepared by Dr. Corinne Krause

April, 1980

F160  
JS  
K6  
1980  
c.3

**PREFACE**

**A Message from the Presidents of AJC and NCJW**

This report on the status of women in Pittsburgh's Jewish organizations represents the results of a cooperative project of our two organizations, the Pittsburgh Chapter of the American Jewish Committee and the National Council of Jewish Women, Pittsburgh Section. Both have long been committed to the democratic principles of equal opportunity in American life and to the standard of individual merit as the basis for evaluating human potential. These tenets are morally right, and they have proved essential for the freedom and mobility of Jews in the modern world. It is only fair to apply these same principles to Jewish women. We believe that they will benefit Jewish women and Jewish communal life as they have benefited Jewish men in the past.

We are pleased that this report indicates that women are increasingly represented in Jewish organizational life in Pittsburgh through appointment and election to the community's decision-making bodies. But the report reminds us that equality is far from accomplished. Women are still underutilized and underrepresented in the lay leadership of Jewish organizations. Among Jewish communal professionals, women generally hold the lower-ranking and lower-paying jobs.

We must all be aware that inequities remain in the Jewish community as in American society as a whole, and we must correct them if we are to be true to the principles we espouse and if our community is to benefit from the talent and energy that women represent.

The achievement of equality requires the commitment and concerted effort of all men and women in the Jewish community. We view this report as an important first step.

Barry Deutsch, President,  
Pittsburgh Chapter,  
American Jewish Committee

Gene Dickman, President,  
Pittsburgh Section,  
National Council of Jewish Women

**PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS**

- American Jewish Committee
- American Zionist Federation
- Beth El Congregation
- Beth Shalom Congregation
- B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation
- B'nai Israel Congregation
- B'nai Israel Young Adult Congregation
- Community Day School
- Dor Hadash Congregation
- Friendship Club
- Jewish Community Center
- Jewish Home and Hospital for Aged
- Montefiore Hospital
- New Light Congregation
- North Hills Jewish Community Center
- Rodef Shalom Congregation
- School of Advanced Jewish Studies
- Temple David Congregation
- Temple Emanuel Congregation, South Hills
- Temple Emanuel Congregation, Greensburg
- Temple Sinai Congregation
- Tree of Life Congregation
- United Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh
- Zionist Organization of America

Four anonymous responses were also received.

2019-01-14 reprinted from *Women's Fall Meeting* Good Will 201 11/19

## INTRODUCTION

The achievement of equality for women in every area of American life ranks high among the priorities of the American Jewish Committee and the National Council of Jewish Women. Both organizations are committed to ending every manifestation of economic and social discrimination, and both accept the responsibility to work toward achieving equality within the organized Jewish community in Pittsburgh.

We are all aware of the talent, energies, and countless hours contributed by women to our community. Jewish women have been responsible for initiating some of our most far-sighted and valuable communal programs, and there is general agreement that the work of women has been the backbone of our social, philanthropic, and educational services. Yet women have generally played a minimal role in the important decision-making boards and committees in the community.

Currently a great deal of ferment is stirring within Jewish religious and communal life. An active Jewish feminist movement directs its efforts toward reinterpreting Halacha and creating new rituals to make women fuller participants in religious life. Our purpose is different: Our project encompasses only the secular aspect of the issue of equality for Jewish women. We set out to examine the status of women as lay leaders and as professionals within Jewish communal organizations.

Our goal is the achievement of equality for women in decision-making positions in both volunteer and professional areas of organized Jewish life. Many Jewish leaders have consistently stated the commitment of their organizations to these goals, but expressions of commitment are not sufficient. In order to establish a base on which to develop policy and programs and from which to measure progress, the Pittsburgh Chapter of AJC and the Pittsburgh Section of NCJW have conducted a survey of Jewish organizations in Greater Pittsburgh. The results are reported in these pages.

## OUR PROCEDURE

A questionnaire was prepared and mailed to Jewish organizations in the Greater Pittsburgh area.\* Respondents were asked about the number of men and women in Jewish institutions and organizations who were members of boards of directors, officers, members of executive committees, and committee chairpersons. One question dealt with organization policy regarding women. Important questions also elicited information about the number and positions of men and women employed as professionals by each organization. Organizations were also asked to define the roles and functions of separate women's divisions, auxiliaries, and congregation sisterhoods. Follow-up personal interviews with men and women leaders in several of the organizations provided insight into their attitudes toward the issues concerning women in the organizations of the community.

Questionnaires were mailed to 84 organizations, including all of the local congregations, the United Jewish Federation and its agencies, and most other institutions of the Jewish community. Responses were received from the 28 organizations. One response came from an organization whose members were all women; it was not included in our analysis. The remaining questionnaires, which include four anonymous responses, represent almost all of the major communal organizations of the city and all of the large congregations. In addition, members of the AJC/NCJW committee interviewed 18 lay and professional leaders of participating organizations.

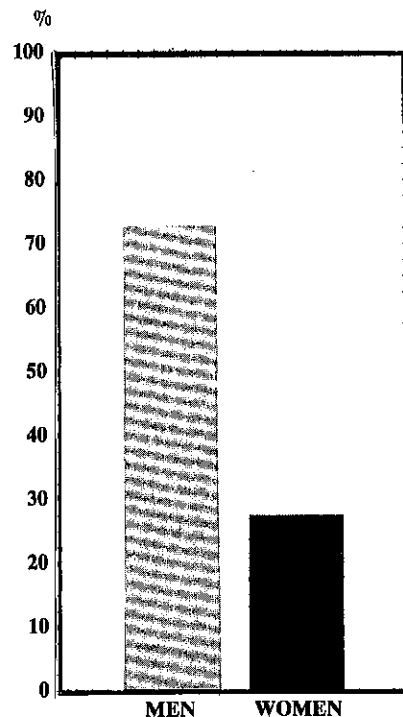
This report summarizes the results of the survey and interviews. It identifies areas where women have achieved a measure of decision-making power and areas where inequity persists. Finally, it suggests questions, policies, and programs which our community must consider in order to achieve the goal of equality of sexes in Jewish organizational life.

\*The complete questionnaire is available on request from the American Jewish Committee, 128 N. Craig St., Suite 215, Pittsburgh, PA 15213.

## RESULTS OF SURVEY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The survey asked the number of men and women on the organization's board of directors. Responses to these questions are summarized in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**  
**BOARD MEMBERS**  
Total = 981



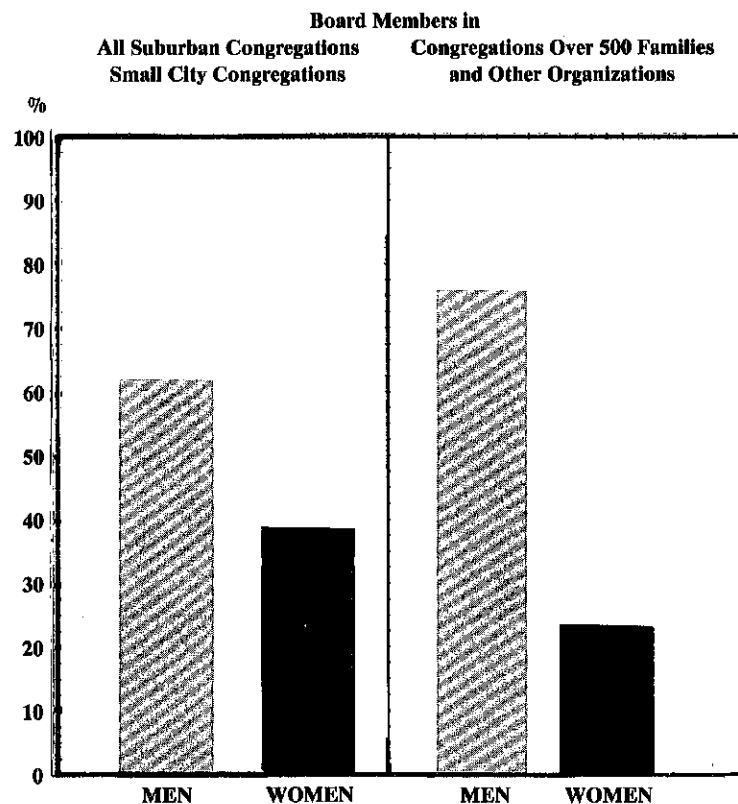
Because the board of directors is the governing body of most organizations, its composition provides an important indication of decision-making power within the organization. By 1979 women were represented on the boards of every participating organization. The 27 responding organizations reported a total of 981 board members of whom 72 percent (707) were men and 28 percent (274) were women.

Women held approximately the same proportion of board seats in both congregations and other communal organizations. However, the survey identified differences in board composition between small (under 200 members) and large organizations and between city and suburban congregations.

Women held an average of only 20 percent of board positions in the city's seven largest organizations and institutions. In five of the seven women accounted for only 13 to 18 percent of board memberships. A few of Pittsburgh's major institutions have made a conscientious effort to bring women into decision making positions on their boards. For example, our interviews revealed that less than five years ago a token handful of women sat on the boards of two of the largest institutions. By contrast, in 1979 women comprised 27 and 35 percent of the membership of these two boards.

Suburban congregations and small city congregations reported a significantly larger proportion of women on their boards than did the larger city institutions, most of which are older. Women represented 38 percent of all board members in the suburban and "small congregation in city" category compared to an average of 24 percent of board members in large congregations and other Jewish organizations and institutions.

**Figure 2**  
**BOARD MEMBERS**

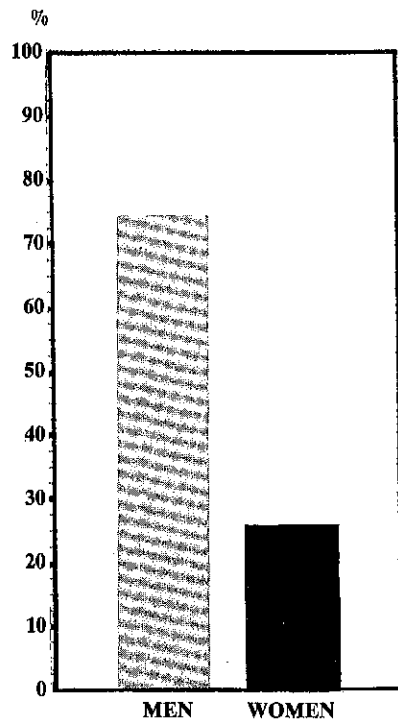


## OFFICERS

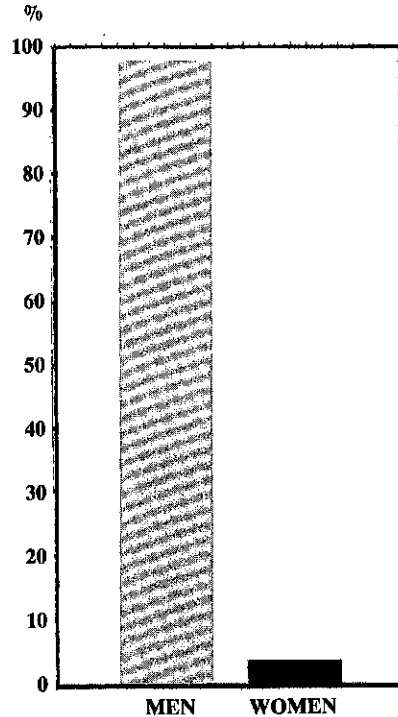
Officers hold the most visible positions of leadership within community organizations. Of a total of 208 officers guiding the 27 organizations, 26 percent were women. Women officers were usually vice presidents, secretaries, recording secretaries, and assistant treasurers.

The tradition of the male president or board chairman remains strong within the organized Jewish community. Twenty-six organizations reported male presidents; only one woman served as president of a Jewish communal organization.

**Figure 3**  
**OFFICERS**  
**TOTAL = 208**



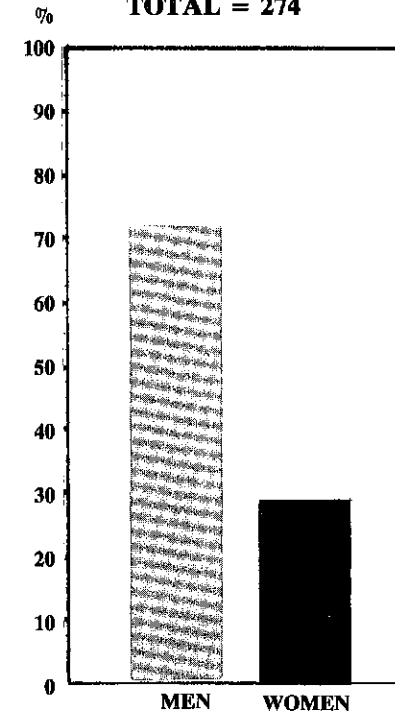
**Figure 4**  
**PRESIDENTS**  
**TOTAL = 27**



## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES

The decision-making power of an organization is often concentrated within its executive committee. Nineteen of the participating organizations have separate executive committees; in other organizations the officers constitute the executive committee. The participating organizations reported a total of 274 executive committee members of which 72 percent (196) were men and 28 percent (78) were women. This division reflects the composition of the boards of directors.

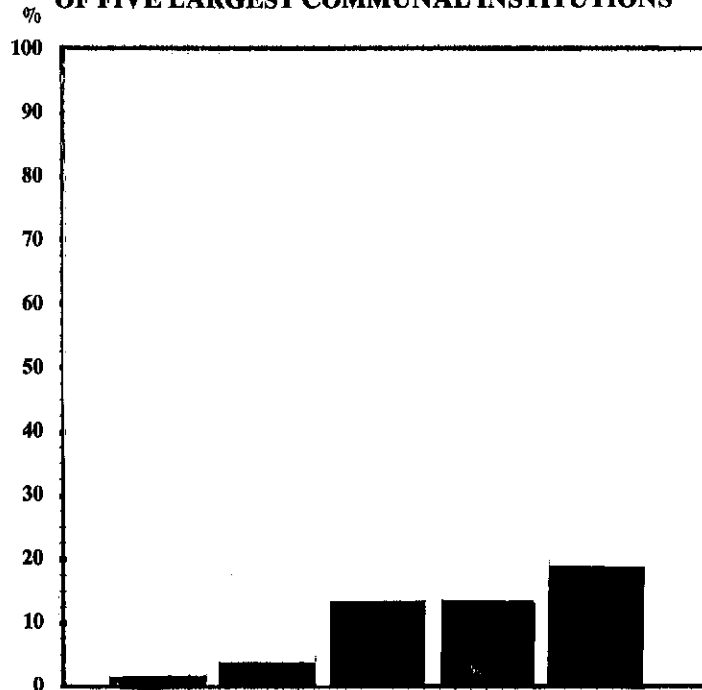
**Figure 5**  
**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES**  
**TOTAL = 274**



Participation of women at the executive committee level is very uneven. Smaller organizations tend to include women in decision-making positions while larger organizations tend to exclude women from such positions. The absence of women is most apparent in large communal organizations and institutions.

Men represent from 81 to 98 percent of executive committees in five of the largest organizations. In two organizations in which women comprise 16 and 18 percent of total board members they account for only 2 and 3 percent of executive committee members. The composition of executive committees illustrates the continued male domination in organizations that control important budgets and make decisions affecting large numbers of people. In five of the largest communal institutions women make up 2, 3, 14, 14, and 18 percent respectively of executive committee memberships.

**Figure 6**  
**WOMEN ON EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES**  
**OF FIVE LARGEST COMMUNAL INSTITUTIONS**

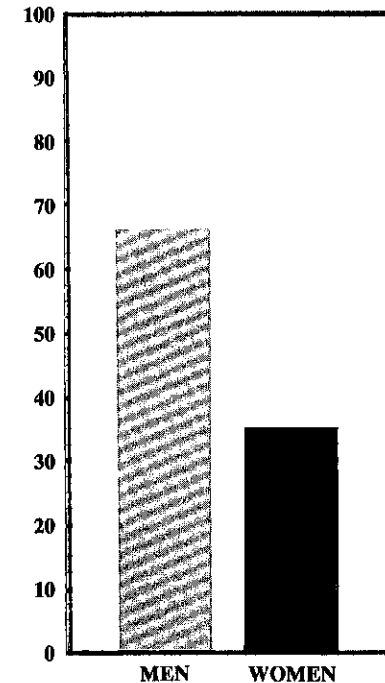


Women have been consistently excluded from the centers of power in Pittsburgh's Jewish community, for policy making is not generally decided at a full meeting of the board of directors. Rather, decisions are often made by executive committees under the leadership of the president of the organization and, when employed, the professional executive director.

## PERMANENT COMMITTEES

A great deal of work and many important decisions are made by the standing committees of organizations. Participating organizations provided data on a total of 228 committees, of which 66 percent were chaired by men and 34 percent by women.

**Figure 7**  
**CHAIRS OF**  
**PERMANENT COMMITTEES**  
% **TOTAL = 228**



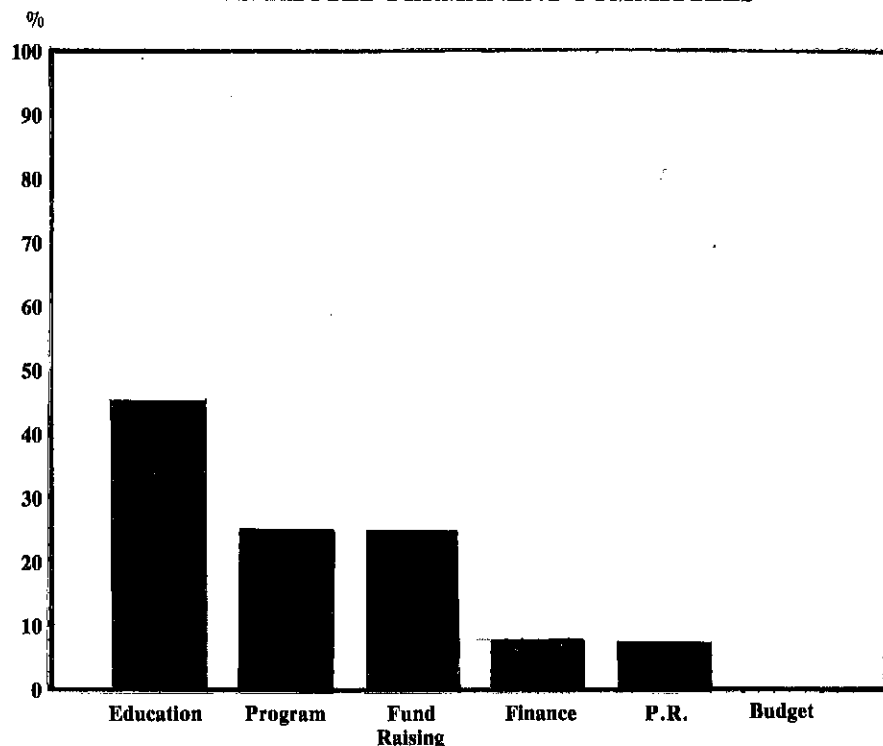
As was the case with boards of directors and executive committees, in larger organizations smaller percentages of women served as chairpersons of standing committees. Significantly, women chaired a greater proportion of committees in congregations (38%) than in general community organizations (28%).

### Women in Traditional Committee Roles

An interesting finding emerged as we asked which committees were chaired by women. While each organization took pride in increasing the number of women in decision-making positions, in the main, the committee chairs women held reflected traditional female roles. No women were reported heading budget committees, though women did chair two finance committees, one in a large educational institution and the other in a congregation. One woman also served as building fund chairperson of a congregation.

On the other hand, women also chaired two building-furnishing and three decorating committees. Moreover, women chaired 46 percent of the education committees, 25 percent of the program committees, and 27 percent of fund-raising committees which held functions such as raffles, dances, luncheons, and art auctions. In addition to these traditional activities, women also headed various social-welfare committees.

**Figure 8**  
**CHAIRS HELD BY WOMEN**  
**IN SELECTED PERMANENT COMMITTEES**



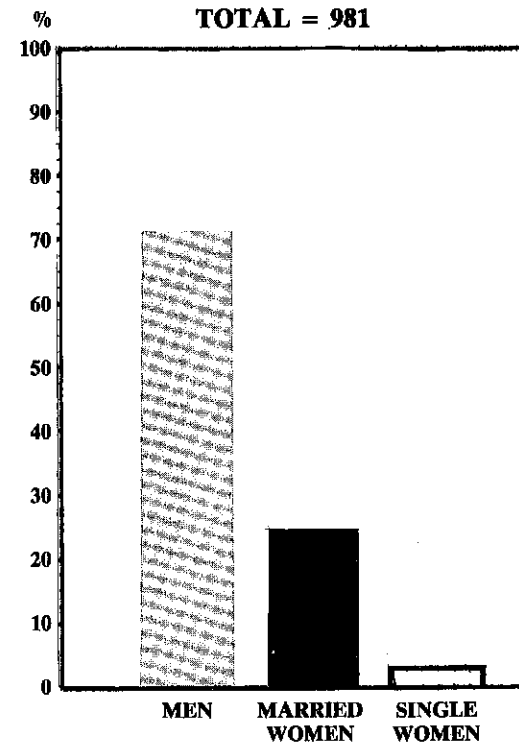
### THE STATUS OF UNMARRIED WOMEN

In 1979 Jewish women had far to go to attain equal standing with men in leadership positions in communal organizations, and unmarried Jewish women were even farther from equality than their married sisters. Of the 981 board members, 234 were women and of them, only 11 percent were unmarried women. Information from the interviews indicates that most were widows.\* Most single Jewish women have no leadership involvement in organized Jewish life.

The isolation of single Jewish adults, particularly women, represents a major issue of concern for the Jewish community in the 1980s. This role reflects the traditional value placed on marriage as the only proper role for a Jewish adult. Traditionally, from the day of her birth, it is assumed that a Jewish girl will marry. Yet, each year the number of single Jewish women increases.

Single women offer talent, energy, and invaluable human resources our community must utilize in order to survive and flourish.

**Figure 9**  
**BOARD MEMBERS**  
**TOTAL = 981**



\*According to the United Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh's Demographic Study of 1976, 70 percent of unmarried women over 40 were widows.



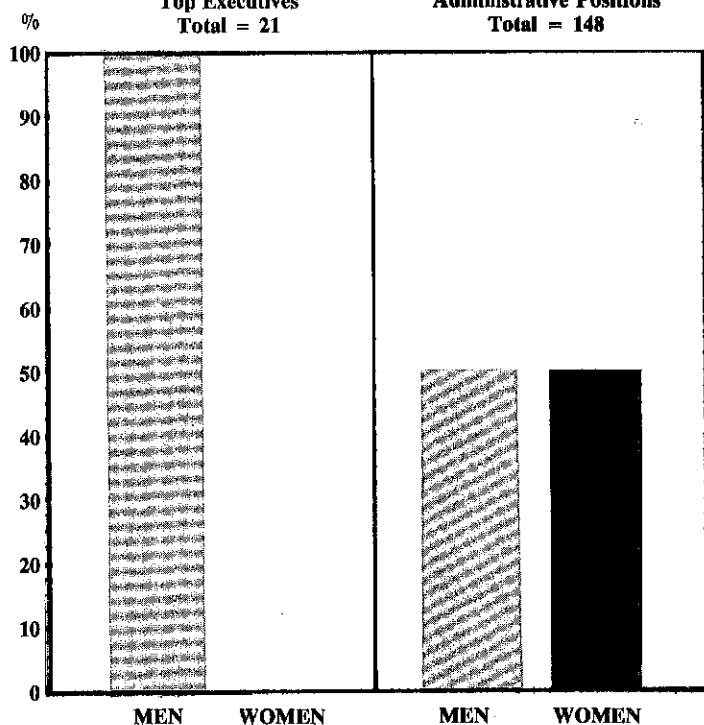
## PROFESSIONALS EMPLOYED IN MANAGERIAL AND EXECUTIVE POSITIONS

Twenty-one of the 27 organizations counted in our survey employed full-time executive directors. All of the directors were men. In order to ascertain whether this was also the case among organizations which did not respond to our questionnaire, we examined the list of affiliated agencies of the United Jewish Federation. Sixteen of these agencies employed executive directors and again, all were men.

Four of these organizations had employed women as executive directors before, but not since 1976.

With no women in top positions, Pittsburgh figures confirm the findings of Amy Stone's article in *Lilith* (Fall/Winter, 1977/78), "The Jewish Establishment is Not an Equal Opportunity Employer."

**Figure 10**  
**PROFESSIONALS EMPLOYED**  
Other  
Administrative Positions  
Total = 148



Many women hold jobs within the organized Jewish community. In the organizations surveyed exactly half of the administrative and supervisory positions were held by women. Consistently, women were found in low and middle level positions. As administrators they were more often employed as heads of Sunday schools, as executive secretaries and in community relations positions.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The status of women in Jewish organizations in Greater Pittsburgh is rising. All of the participating organizations have elected some women as officers and as members of their boards of directors. However, our community has not yet achieved equality in organizational leadership positions.

Women comprised 28 percent of executive committees and 28 percent of board members. However, one hundred percent of the executive directors were men; 96 percent of the presidents were men, and men comprised an average of 90 percent of executive committees in all organizations of over 500 members within the city. Women held a higher proportion of leadership positions in small city congregations and in all suburban congregations.

Our interviews confirmed the contribution of women to the well being and vitality of our community as well as support for a larger role for women in community leadership. Men and women mentioned gains over the past few years. Several women, however, expressed frustration with the pace of change. Even those appointed to board positions felt underutilized.

A few men explained inequality as a function of money—men gave more dollars. "When women make it and give it, they'll get the power to decide how to spend it," said one respondent. Increasing equality in families, the product of women working and the sharing of decision making power by husbands and wives, is already changing this traditional pattern.

Equality is the way of the future; that trend is clear. Our challenge is to achieve equality without delay, and to make it work to benefit our entire community.

## WHAT REMAINS TO BE DONE?

The American Jewish Committee and the National Council of Jewish Women have pledged their commitment to the achievement of equality of the sexes in organized Jewish life.

The Pittsburgh Chapter of the American Jewish Committee announces that it will:

- 1) adopt an Equal-Status-of-Women position paper setting forth in writing a plan to achieve full equality of men and women within the Pittsburgh AJC chapter;
- 2) charge its nominating committee to consider women equally with men for every elective office and board position;
- 3) charge its president to consider women equally with men for every committee chair and every other appointive position.

The Pittsburgh Section of the National Council of Jewish Women, in support of its long-standing commitment to the achievement of equal status of women in every area of communal life will:

- 1) continue and expand the development of educational programs and leadership training which are producing qualified women for more extensive and responsible roles in the Jewish community;
- 2) press for active participation and employment of qualified women in all national and local community executive offices and policy-making bodies.

In 1985 AJC and NCJW will carry out and publish the results of a follow up survey on the status of women in Jewish organizations of Greater Pittsburgh.

The equality of women in organized Jewish life is morally right. The energies and talents of women are essential to the survival, well being and progress of our community. Therefore, we urge every organization and institution in the Jewish community to adopt an explicit commitment to eliminate all vestiges of inequality. Our next survey will, we are certain, report important progress as organizations take positive action to assure full equality of the sexes in all leadership positions.

## COMMITTEE ON THE ROLE OF WOMEN

### Co-Chairpersons

Corinne Krause	Eileen Lane
American Jewish Committee	National Council of Jewish Women

### Members

Irving Bennett  
Harold Bigler  
Eva Blum  
Estelle Comay  
Marydale DeBor  
Gene Dickman  
Sally Friedman  
Linda Gordon  
Caryl Halpern  
Shirley Lavine  
Jane Lobl  
Emily Mendelson  
Enid Miller  
Laurie Moser  
Marla Perlman  
Dorothy Raizman  
Barbara Shore  
Harvey Zeve  
Lucille Chaplin, AJC staff  
Jonathan Levine, AJC staff