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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
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DOT FEDERAL WOMEN'S WEEK BREAKFAST
WASHINGTON, D.C.
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My first thought when I walked in here this morning and saw all of you was: "Who's running the Department?" I have come to depend on all of you and I would like to thank you for your hard work and commitment to our transportation policies and programs. And the men will just have to manage without us for a little while because in commemoration of DOT Federal Women's Week, I want to share a few thoughts with you on working women, and specifically, the women of this Department.

I suggest that you and I are natural allies in what I like to call America's "Quiet Revolution," the tidal wave of qualified and talented women who have entered America's work force in record numbers over the past 30 years. The impact of this change has been tremendous. As the Census Bureau commented in a recent report, "Perhaps no other change has more far-reaching implications for society and the economy than the dramatic increase in the labor force of women... between 1947 and 1980, the number of women in the labor force increased 173 percent."

They say there is strength in numbers. But even with this influx, it's been difficult for women in the work force to break into occupational fields traditionally thought of as "men's domain." Dr. Barbara McClintock just won the Nobel Prize in Medicine for work she did four decades ago, but was unrecognized for years by her professional -- mostly male -- peers.

If those of you who may have heard me tell this story will pardon the repetition, I would like to briefly mention that when I entered Harvard Law School, in 1962, I was one of 25 women in a class of 550 students. I'll never forget that, on my first day there, I was accosted by a male classmate, who demanded to know what I was doing in law school.

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"Don't you realize," he said, "that there are men who'd give their right arm for your place in law school? Men who would use their legal education?" The inference was that I was taking a man's place. And come to think of it, some may have felt that way when I became Secretary of Transportation.

That experience was my first, but by no means, my final exposure to chauvinism. Once each semester, there was Professor Leach's Ladies Day -- when our otherwise ignored females would sit before the class and answer questions -- after beginning the ritual with a required poem of our own composition.

My colleagues at Harvard seemed to have forgotten that the figure of Justice was a woman. They seemed oblivious to the psychological barriers they erected, ignorant of the fears they inspired or the doubts they nurtured.

Women then did a lot of wondering. We wondered if there would be jobs when we got out of school. We wondered if we would be accepted into the masculine dens of the legal world, where law books and leather chairs alike tended to be reserved for "old boys," whatever their age.

Today's graduating women have less to wonder about. They have much more to work toward. In fact, the Harvard law class is now almost 40 percent female. And during the last decade alone, the number of women receiving masters in business administration has soared by nearly 800 percent.

Yes, we've made progress, but even now, too many Americans practice a subtle form of discrimination. It's more insidious than verbal prejudice; it's called partonization, and it undercuts women just as surely as the old barriers of law and custom.

Social critic Marya Mannes put it best, I think, when she wrote: "Nobody objects to a women being a good writer or sculptor or geneticist if, at the same time, she manages to be a good wife, a good mother, good-looking, good-tempered, well-dressed, well-groomed and unaggressive."

In other words, in today's society we are faced with the tyranny of perfection. You, too, can be treated the same as a man -- so long as you out-perform him. For all our gains, roadblocks still remain on the path to prosperity and job satisfaction. Large segments of our society continue to regard millions of women as consumers instead of producers. Too many employers regard working women as pursuers of pin money and pay them accordingly, about 3/5ths on the average, of a man's salary, despite educational and professional backgrounds that may be identical.

When I finished law school in 1965, only 30 percent of women were in the work force. Today, 18 years later, some 52 percent are working. And the most dramatic change has come from mothers with children between the ages of 6 and 17 -- fully 64 percent work. As President Reagan said three weeks ago, "America's society has changed dramatically during the last decade. And American women have been a major force behind those changes ... Women filled more than half of all the new jobs in managerial, professional and technical fields between 1980 and 1982 ... The number of women-owned businesses is growing five times faster than it is among men." The implications of all these numbers, not only on the makeup of our work force, but for family life are tremendous. But the effect on the family cannot be all bad, as some would claim. I was pleased to note that for the first time in two decades, the divorce rate declined last year. I hesitate to attribute that entirely to job satisfaction, but I do

know how rewarding and fulfilling my husband, Bob, and I find our two careers in our marriage.

In the years ahead, America must wake up to the fact that the very interpersonal skills of consensus building, mediating, moderating and dealing effectively with people -- skills that studies and surveys have historically identified as predominant in women -- are the building blocks of this post-industrial society. It's the management of people and not the management of machinery or materials that will be crucial.

As the first woman Secretary of Transportation, I feel a strong commitment to needed changes within the Department as well as to our transportation system itself. By the way, I feel I've found my own footnote in history as the first woman to head a branch of the armed services, the U.S. Coast Guard.

When I arrived at the Department, one of the first questions I asked was: What percentage of the Department's employees are women? The answer: 19 percent. Then I asked what the percentage was 16 years ago when the Department was founded. The answer was 18.5 percent. Clearly, here is an area where change is long overdue.

I asked what percentage of our work force are women employees in grades 13 and above? The answer: one percent. Again -- no doubt that there is room for substantial improvement. I cannot believe that qualified candidates, female candidates -- and that of course means minority candidates, as well -- to fill professional positions are lacking. Talking around the problem has been done before. We decided to take action. I am determined that under my watch as Secretary of Transportation, there will be increased opportunities for women in the Department. I hope this will not just be a temporary change, but a long-term, permanent change to the way opportunities for professional growth and advancement are handled with regard to our women employees. I am holding managers throughout the Department accountable -- and top management in particular. I have told the Modal Administrators and supervisors that I expect their cooperation and full support on this and all indicators to date are that this is true. I want to see results.

In a Department composed of 102,000 people, that vision of change is indeed a challenge -- as you know, it takes quite a number of women to move the percentages up even one point! Due to fiscal constraints and personnel ceilings, we cannot "change the world" at the Department. We can make progress, however.

That is why we have developed a nine-point program as a vehicle to increase opportunities for women. These opportunities span the range from entry-level to senior management positions. A brochure on the program, "Initiatives to Improve Opportunities for Women," is available in every personnel office. You should have received a memo I have sent to all employees notifying them about the opportunities this program presents. I had the privilege of speaking two weeks ago at a kick-off briefing we had for OST employees to explain how the program works. The other administrations are working now on action plans to make sure their employees know all the fine points of the program.

Already two classes -- 58 women -- have been trained in our seminar for prospective women managers. I have met with both classes and I would just like to take a minute to read you a part of a letter I received from the first class.

"The Seminar has provided us a unique opportunity to meet and exchange ideas with women throughout the Department with similar goals and concerns. We are excited about the theories and techniques that we learned and look forward to applying them. As a result of this Seminar, we are committed to support your efforts in promoting career growth and opportunities for women in the Department."

I can't tell you how much hearing that meant to me. All of the women in the classes were given small telephone books by the instructors with the inscription, "Old Girls' Network." I am an official member of the Old Girls' Network and I invite all of you here to join this network too.

Let me run through some other successes of our program so far. OST and FHWA have their upward mobility announcements out. This initiative is for women in clerical positions who want to move up to other challenges. The other administrations will have their announcements out no later than the end of November.

I am particularly enthusiastic about the progress we are making with the mobility assignment training program. As you know, we have a number of women who are anxious to have experiences in the Department to allow them to move up from their mid-level management positions. We plan to have a draft directive describing how the system will operate in the hands of the operating administrations shortly.

Our goal with regard to the Management Skills Seminar for employees GS-13 through 15 is to increase the rate of participation of women to 40 percent. For example, in February, before we began our push, in a class of 20 people, only 2 were females. In the two sessions since then the number of women participants has quadrupled. We also plan to at least double the rate of participation of women in external training programs for DOT managers and executives. As an example, last year we sent seven employees to the Brookings Institution, one of whom was female. This year, we're sending 17, 8 of whom are women.

When the SES Candidate Development Program opened in July, we actively recruited to ensure that all qualified candidates knew of this opportunity. We were successful in that we had an excellent group of people applying for the program, and a much higher number of women and minorities applied for this new class.

Finally, we have contacted over 170 schools for the Graduate Cooperative Education Program. Almost all agencies expect to have placements by the next semester.

With this program, we are going to take the "Quiet Revolution" a small, but well-paced step forward. We are helping women to enter the work force and we're preparing more women to assume managerial responsibilities to broaden existing skills and to move into higher paying jobs. We are totally committed to the task. I will do all I can. For example, there are currently 60 employees in confidential or policy-making roles that I have personally appointed since coming to DOT. Of these, 32 are women, appointed on the basis of merit and talent.

We've watched a "Quiet Revolution" become more visible and articulate in this country as inflation, changing family patterns and their own career ambitions have led millions of women into the marketplace. It was indeed interesting to see Time magazine note recently in an article about stress, that certain professional groups, perhaps because of the satisfaction gained for their work, tend to live longer lives. The

groups that seem to handle stress best are music conductors, nuns and those women who are listed in Who's Who.

I am reminded of the story a minister told me a few days ago when I was attending a banquet for the United Negro College Fund. It was about a young child who wandered away from a West Virginia farmhouse at night... Her parents and neighbors from miles around searched for hours... Then the mother suggested that all the neighbors join hands and form a line... They soon found the little girl, but too late... She was dead... "Dear God," cried the grief-stricken mother, "Why didn't we join hands before?..."

This is the kind of partnership that can help us make a difference at DOT. Thank you for what you have helped us achieve so far, and let us continue to work together to open more doors.

During Federal Women's Week, let us commit ourselves to this task. I hope you will take advantage of the activities scheduled throughout the week and the opportunities offered in the nine-point program. I sincerely wish you every success. As we succeed individually we move the "Quiet Revolution," another step toward the equality the women of this country deserve.

Thank you.

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