I never had a formal mentor. Indeed, when people ask me, “Who was your mentor?” and I say “No one,” they react with shock. How could that be? Yet neither the concept nor the reality were available to me as a grad student at Michigan 1957-62, territory largely off-limits to women at the time. Nevertheless, having snuck in under the cover of lightness, I had to learn how to enter the profession and, once I had a toehold, how to survive. Concomitantly, I had to learn to become a scholar and professional writer while, at the same time, I was learning to be a wife, mother, and citizen, and more—in short, while I was learning how to survive in the guerilla theater of life. Fifty years later, I’m still inventing and re-inventing ways to do it all in this life that is ever-exciting, never static.

What follows is an anatomization of some significant ways in which I—and by extrapolation, all of us—can experience the mosaic of mentorship, acquiring the elements of what we need to know and do to survive, even prevail, in professional situations. In real life, these invariably leach into the personal, but to keep the metaphor intact let’s imagine straight, precise edges rather than the blurs and blots of an Impressionist painting. When the pieces are assembled and adjusted to fit the contours of our individual personalities and our particular work, the mosaic delineates a professional portrait that is like no other.

Warning! This is a cheerful essay. It’s about a cheerful subject, coming-of-age professionally and acquiring knowledge and power in the process. Do-it-yourself discussions are always upbeat because the learner invariably succeeds in accomplishing the task(s) at hand. Although, as Yeats says, “we must labor to be beautiful,” self-help essays make everything look easier than it really is. If you want noir, try my “Teaching College English as a Woman.” If you want tales of exploitative mentors who stole their advisees’ research—or their virginity—I can refer you to victims who went to other schools (see also Tenner). For gloom see Rachel Hile Basset’s Parenting and Professing, discussed below. And for nervousness and anxiety amongst nouveau women scientists, check out the X-Girls series running in the Careers section of the Chronicle of Higher Education throughout 2006-2007. The good-old bad-old days seem to be with us still, judging from the reactions of “The Dismissive Male” and “The Condemning Wo/man” to their plight, evil “archetypes,” says Tess Isaac—yes, even in the twenty-first century—“who can derail your career” (C1). And, as

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one of the astute reviewers of this manuscript observed, check out the footnotes
in the essay you are reading “erupting” with “un-cheery’ thoughts.”

Nevertheless, in order to stick to the point—and to keep my cool on the
very hot day when I’m revising this—I’ve decided against incorporating most
of the negative advice, uncongenial personalities, lies, betrayals, and turbulence
I’ve experienced. Remember, I’m writing this when many of the pieces are laid
out and much of the design is apparent (though still subject to change, even now
nothing is—dare I say?—set in stone)—a happy state indeed. So relax and enjoy
it with me.

THE DESIGN

Even as a child I was a covert rebel. The Lessons in Life, imparted by
my angry stay-at-home college-educated mom in the 40s and 50s, and reinforced
by my happy stay-at-home grandmother (who had worked as a housemaid until
she married a journeyman printer in 1902 and reared six children), focused on the
need to “Sacrifice!” one’s own desires and ambitions for those of one’s family,
actual or prospective. The mentorship they offered flew in on the wings of the
Angel in the House, and flew out of my six-year-old consciousness just as fast,
for my secret role models were Eleanor Roosevelt and a woman writer in my
small college town. Oh, and Dr. Seuss, for as soon as I learned to read I decided
I would become a writer and college professor, as well as a wife and mother—the
most fun and noble callings I could imagine.

I understood even then that I would have to design my own mosaic
for life. It would be bold, innovative, harmonious, attractive, female. I (and not
someone else, particularly not my father, the only man I knew, a German pa-
terfamilias chemical engineering professor) would determine its configuration.
Since no whole model was apparent or accessible at the time (even Alcott’s Jo in
Little Women copped out by subordinating her ambitions to her own Germanic
professor husband) I would have to decide what my personal ideal of the good
life should be and then find the pieces that suited it.* I would arrange and, if
necessary, rearrange them, omit some, learn to fit them together, improvising the
ultimate design until it became a work of art, of life.

“Fortune favors the prepared mind,” said Pasteur, and I knew even in
my innocence that to reinforce the ever-evolving design of a life-in-progress I
would need to select the usable bits of advice—of differing sizes, shapes, textures,
the very stones themselves—from wherever they came, whenever they arrived. I
would need to be ever alert, aware of opportunity, and have a sense of a good fit
for the right piece in the right place at the right time. I would also—and this part
was easy—have to ignore the bits and pieces of advice I didn’t want to hear. But
where in the world would I, could I, find appropriate mentors to show me what
I needed to learn?

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“Revere your husband and honor his right to rule you and your children.” This precept from Helen Andelin’s *Fascinating Womanhood* arrived in my office mailbox on the very day I was teaching *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*. Had this allegedly good advice possessed a current date, instead of one from forty-four years ago (1963), I’d have treated it as a delicious send-up of conventional matrimonial relationships, an obligato to Gertrude Stein’s wise and witty presentation of her own unconventional matrimonial partnership in post-Impressionist Paris. Could not such admonitions as “Don’t try to excel [your husband] in anything which requires masculine ability” and “Don’t stand in the way of his decisions, or his law” serve as ironic commentary on Toklas’s ventriloquized observation that “The geniuses came and talked to Gertrude Stein and the wives sat with me. . . . [G]eniuses, near geniuses and might be geniuses, all having wives, and I have sat and talked with them all all the wives. . . (87). But *Fascinating Womanhood* and its clone, Marabel Morgan’s *The Total Woman*, published a decade later, were indeed sincere.

Let such period pieces serve as a metaphoric explanation for why, when I was preparing to enter grad school at the University of Michigan, one of the nation’s top twenty then as now, there was no concept of mentoring, or of being mentored—at least, not for women. For *Fascinating Womanhood* represents the masculinist sensibility—“Don’t let the outside world crowd you for time to do your homemaking tasks well,” as my mother and grandmother understood all too clearly—that prevailed throughout the first two-thirds of the twentieth century. Although I had received a faculty award for being Michigan’s Outstanding Honors English Major, the advice male faculty gave me, from their exclusively male bastion, could have kept me out of the profession entirely: “What right have you to take a man’s seat! Get a teaching certificate so you’ll have something to fall back on.” Or it might have molded me into a genderless creature without a husband, children, creativity, or independent research of my own: “Every child a man has is an incentive for him to strive harder. Every child a woman has is an albatross around her neck, an encouragement to drop out.” With advice like that, demeaning, dehumanizing, why would I want a mentor? I simply showed up, newly wed to Martin, a grad student in social psychology, to begin doctoral work of my own.

**The Do-It-Yourself Ethos**

The ethos of the time, the place. I could not, therefore, from the perspective of either a grad student or a newcomer to the profession, benefit from Janice Lauer’s “ethics of care,” whereby a mentor “exhibits a willingness to nurture, to act in concrete situations with emotional involvement, to make responsible moral decisions in particular human relationships. . . . to step out of one’s personal frame of reference into the other’s” (234). The concept of the novice guided by a wise, caring, selfless, and unwavering mentor that prevails today simply was not part of the ethos of the time or place fifty years ago.
I doubt that any of the nation’s top graduate programs—in any field, including law and medicine as well as academic disciplines—would have provided mentoring that demonstrated an “ethic of care”—for either men or women students. An ERIC search of “mentors and mentoring” in “higher education” reveals no discussion of the topic between 1965 (ERIC’s starting date) and 1970; 33 articles in 1970-1979; after which, as Robert Gross reports, “the topic took off,” with “230 pieces in 1980-84; 597 in 1985-89; 1,051 in 1990-94; 1,524 in 1995-99” (Gross 2); the numbers are comparable in the current five-year period—1,949 hits as of October 11, 2005.

**In graduate school.** At Michigan there was, at least between my advisors and me, and I think, for most students, an invisible wall separating the professional from the personal. Literature students and faculty were not on a first name basis (the creative writers were a more raffish lot), but then, the era itself was more formal. (Remember that in the 50s women still wore hats, gloves, and high heels for airplane travel, and flight attendants dressed with comparable decorum.) Graduate students were expected to stay on their own side of the wall, which I did, and faculty on the other. This does not mean that my advisors were ill-disposed toward their students, only that they were impersonal and somewhat distant. Oh, I would occasionally walk the venerable Austin Warren home, carrying in my hike basket the tomes that undergirded his class. But my status was signaled indelibly when at a grad student wedding, he introduced me to his wife—“I’d like you to meet one of my very best students”—after which he whispered *sotto voce*, “What did you say your name was?”

At Michigan at the time, grad students had no choice of areas for prelim exams, which covered British and American lit from Beowulf to Virginia Woolf, as well as linguistics. The faculty made out the twelve-page single-spaced reading list—one line read “Shakespeare, complete works”—and most of us took the exams at the end of two years of coursework, no shilly-shallying. Such high-pressure preparation meant, for instance, memorizing a dozen restoration plays, full of interchangeable characters and plots, in three stupefying days. Nevertheless, the library I internalized has lasted all the days of my life; I draw on that information bank every day, in every class.

The faculty indeed knew what was good for us—and for themselves. We could not choose our dissertation directors or committee members, although we could sound out faculty with common interests; I got my first choices all round. Our meetings were focused on the work at hand, not on other professional issues such as getting a job, professional decorum, or publishing, or balancing the personal and professional aspects of one’s life. I did, however, invite my dissertation advisor and his wife and two-year-old to a cookout (with Martin grilling our dinner in a downpour) when I was nine months pregnant—a visit he never forgot in the post-dissertation years when we had become friends on a first-name basis.

**New Ph.D., New Parent.** Perhaps there wasn’t much concern with mentoring in the 50s and early 60s because jobs were plentiful, at least for men, and
arranged informally through phone calls. The MLA Job List hadn’t been invented; word of vacancies circulated through the Old Boy network; offers were made and accepted, largely to the New Boys on the auction block, married or single, with or without children. Married women were expected to follow their husbands ("Don’t have a lot of preconceived ideas of what you want out of life," Andelin reminds us), and to heed the biological clock, though teaching freshman composition part-time was a safe harbor.8

I confess to having conformed willingly to these expectations. We left Ann Arbor with a ten-day-old infant; his brother was born two years later. Martin could earn more, so he took the full-time job, and I turned down a comparable offer, a position initiated by my dissertation advisor, that would have required a daily two-hour drive in icy Cleveland winters. On grounds that I’ve never regretted—that if I wanted to strongly influence our children’s values and well-being I needed to be around them a great deal during their formative years—I accepted, instead, a half-time assistant professorship (at, I might add, a far more prestigious university) near our house that meant only eighteen hours a week away from the children. If I’d had a female mentor, or any mentor who was invested in rearing children, would I have chosen differently? It’s impossible to say, for I had no female professors at Michigan (except for the adjuncts who taught women’s phys ed), and the only full-time women faculty during my first ten years on the job, full or part time, were single, except for myself.

THE IMPORTANT PIECES: MENTORS FOR COMBINING WORK AND MOTHERHOOD

Mom, a mixed model. My own mother was an indifferent housekeeper, self-declared “wire mother” rather than the “cloth mother” nurturer of psychologist Harry Harlow’s monkey experiments, who hated being an ancillary to her male chauvinist husband and would have been much happier as an artist. Our most enjoyable times were spent reading or drawing, but from the example of her continually smoldering frustration I understood that to be happy I had to be free to pursue my bright Utopian vision of the ideal life, academic and personal. Consequently, I would have to marry a man who not only shared these ideals but would act to reinforce them for both of us.

Pop, ditto. Although I couldn’t admit it in my mother’s presence, my father’s life as a professor always seemed more interesting than hers as a housewife. He got to spend long hours with students, to travel, and to write. What could be better? As I learned to think for myself, however, my writing style and humanistic values began to diverge greatly from his chemical engineer’s unwavering allegiance to nuclear energy and “better living through chemistry,” particularly DDT. Eventually I realized that all of his work was self-published, rather than appearing in scholarly journals and university and trade presses where it would “count.” When I started dating Martin as an undergrad, my father’s allegiance to me stopped dead.
Martin, the ideal life partner. That my parents disowned me on the eve of my marriage in 1958 ("If you marry that Jew we will have nothing to do with him, or you, or any children you might have") eliminated further possibilities of their mentorship or even moral support for the most meaningful aspects of this life. Thus when Martin and I married we felt like Adam and Eve in the garden; in building a new life together in this brave new world, we had to figure out how to do it without intimate models. We adopted a single principle to govern our lives together: we would do whatever we could to enhance each others' personal and professional lives. This principle, our version of the Golden Rule, made de facto feminists of us both. It meant, at the outset, that we would both work on our doctorates full-time, that we would share the responsibilities for earning money, being parents, and running the household; and that if one or the other of us needed extra help to accomplish something important, they'd get it. The proportions of each have varied over the years, with each of us assuming responsibility for what we could do—or liked to do—best.

Friends and neighbors. I have received excellent childrearing advice from friends and neighbors over the years ("Wipe off the blood from your child's cut before you faint. It'll be shallower than you expect"), but no single individual served as either mentor or model for trying to write, teach, and have a family. The twenty-four essays in Rachel Hile Basset's *Parenting and Professing*—by contributors at every stage of the profession—make it clear how individualistic "Balancing Family Work with an Academic Career" (Bassett's subtitle) can be. However, my essay, which addresses the weekly "Two Thousand Mile Commute" between St. Louis and Albuquerque in the 70s, to fulfill a dream job, seems to be the only unreservedly happy piece in the book, for the balancing act was exhilarating. Martin enabled me to accept this radically satisfying alternative to dismal adjuncting close at hand: "Go for it," he said, and promised to be home from the university when our adolescent sons were home from school. And so I did.

Professional friendships. My strongest friendships with professional peers and colleagues, men and women alike, are based on what is fundamental to all good friendships—compatible values and common interests—rather than on mentorship models. Whether on the local campus or, more commonly, on the national scene (and now, via email), we reinforce each others' professional work, we learn from each others' scholarship, we work together in leadership positions, and we have fun together. As friends would do in any context, we have supported one another through professional crises (tenure fights, publication problems, general nastiness), as well as existential onslaughts—disfunction, disease, divorce, death. So when we say, as we sometimes do, that we regard each other as models for lives well lived, we know we are looking at all-too-human reflections of ourselves, not images of perfection.
Mentors for Research and Writing

Writers whose works I like. To love literature from an early age is to fall in love with words, books, the sound and the sense, to—as Eudora Welty says of her mother—"read Dickens in the spirit in which she would have eloped with him." Thus enraptured, we learn from writers we love ways of understanding and reacting to the world. Through their angles of vision, expressed in language individual and idiosyncratic, we learn a range of linguistic and stylistic strategies to imitate, test, reject, adapt, and make our own. I was too timid, too bourgeois, to adopt the lifestyle of noted writers of the 50s—falling-off-the-platform-drunk or sweetly suicidal—but from these excellent writers and their—largely nonfiction—successors I learned, and continue to learn, the virtues of clarity, economy, precision, and wit. A mosaic of possibilities.

People whose judgment I like, whose knowledge I need:

Undergraduate faculty. They determined the honors English curriculum at Michigan; their judgments, enthusiasms taught us what authors to like and why. They also taught us to think for ourselves, and when I did I discovered women writers and feminist readings—off limits to 50s professors but mainstream thirty years later. But perhaps the best advice came from my violin teacher, sophomore year: “Become a writer” (although he had never read a syllable I’d written). What would I have done if my scratching on paper had been as awful as that on four out-of-tune strings? I never thought to ask.

Graduate faculty—Top-of-the-line editor. One nonfiction faculty member, Art Eastman, himself a master teacher and paragon of clarity, taught me through meticulous line editing that questioned the choice of every word, every punctuation mark, every indentation and white space, the inextricable relations of sound and sense. His acute sensibility affects every revision I make.

Graduate faculty—Impeccable researchers. Throughout graduate school, but particularly at the dissertation stage, my advisors taught me how to do good library research—accurate, precise, thorough, impeccably documented. My dissertation advisor, Robert Super, was extraordinary at keeping my research on track and on time. He insisted on a chapter a month, which he read and discussed with me within twenty-four hours of receiving it—a particularly helpful process in view of the fact that I was also pushing the deadline of my first pregnancy. I’ve adopted his efficient time frame as the ideal for my own dissertation advisees, though not all find it as congenial as I did.

Advice from publishing scholars. Although I occasionally received papers in both grad and undergrad courses with “Publish this!” on the margins, the faculty never showed us how to do it; publication was what faculty did, not students. But I did have the good fortune to collaborate with one of my grad school professors, Francis Lee Utley—medievalist, linguist, Americanist—on Bear, Man, and God, a collection of readings on William Faulkner’s The Bear that grew out
of Fran’s proposal and the prelim notes a fellow grad student, Arthur Kinney, and I had prepared. Fran’s gracious good sense mediated between Art’s pedantry and my insouciance. In addition to scholarly scrupulosity, he brought balance and wit (“Do I detect a rebuke?”) to the collaborative process.

My own research sense. Following the practice of some of my cutting-edge professors, I taught myself how to ask the good (i.e. original and exciting) questions — those that went where no man or woman (yes!) had gone before. I taught myself how to figure out the methodology to address these questions. And I especially taught myself how to persevere with enticing projects, such as writing the first and — for twenty five years thereafter — only biography of America’s most widely-read author, Dr. Benjamin Spock, when conventional wisdom advised writing only about high-culture authors who were safely dead. Indeed, my first post-Ph.D. department chair’s opinion had been emphatic: “If you write about Dr. Spock, you’ll cut your throat professionally,” he said. “Why don’t you write biographical articles about major poets to establish your career, and then you can afford to throw it away on Spock.” As I proceeded to do what I wanted anyway, I realized that no grad school advice had addressed either the ethics or the methodology of working entirely from primary materials, developing a professional friendship with one’s subject, conducting extensive interviews, dealing with the correspondence of living authors — or going on peace marches and having one’s phone tapped by the FBI in the course of research. I learned on the job.

Advice from Dr. Spock. Dr. Spock also taught me to write. The trusting pediatrician never looked at my writing to see whether my dissertation style, perforce formal and bristling with footnotes, would be compatible with his friendly, low-key advice to parents. When I began the biography, my first extended post-dissertation research, our styles would have clashed. But in time I learned from analyzing the style of this Strunk and White of baby book authors to write with clarity and precision — as if a child’s life depended on it. I learned to translate technical language into nonspecialized terms, to break up long sentences and paragraphs to please the ear and the eye, a reinforcement of Eastman’s good advice. Spock composed aloud, sometimes in my presence, and from him I learned to listen to the words, the music, the sounds of silence. He also gave me occasional child rearing advice (unwilling to say to my young sons, “Go away, don’t bother me, I’m writing about Dr. Spock,” I learned to work with them in the room); it was like hearing the word of God.

Co-authorship with Martin. Although I had edited a textbook before I began the biography, I did not believe that — as a part-time teacher — I had the right to publish in a scholarly journal. (How I could combine the humility of this irrational belief left over from grad school with the chutzpah necessary to write the biography of America’s most famous living author is a paradox I cannot, to this day, understand.) My first scholarly article was a case study of a student writer’s writing and revision process, but because he did all of his work in his dorm — off
limits to women—Martin volunteered to do the observations. He asked the right questions, kept good notes, and as a consequence, we co-authored the paper and decided to submit it to *College English*, then as now the major journal in the field. So reticent was I that I urged submission only under his name, but when the acceptance arrived by return mail he said, “Now do you want your name on it?” and insisted that I be first author. Not only has Martin always given me a room of my own, but a name of my own.

Martin is also my most reliable critic. Along with my research assistants *du jour*, he reads the penultimate draft of everything I write. The fact that he’s in a different field means that I can’t count on him to supply a lot of background information, to tolerate in-group critical jargon, or to agree with the discipline’s prevailing conventional judgments. If he can’t read it or doesn’t get it, I rewrite until he does. I used to argue and protest a lot, but I’m kinder, gentler these days—except on the rare occasions when he says, “This still needs a lot more work.”

**Editors and manuscript reviewers.** Publication of the *College English* article (1969) was all it took to set me on the fast track. It’s possible to get derailed, of course; one friend rewrote her dissertation over a dozen years, from feminist, then deconstructionist, then post-modernist perspectives before finally finding a publisher who stayed in business long enough to get it into print. But I have found it easier to stay on track by reminding myself of Dr. Spock’s quintessential advice—“Trust yourself. You know more than you think you do.” This has been a useful mantra throughout years of submitting articles, essays, and reviews, and developing books-in-progress to editors with highly variable agendas, perspectives, and tastes. Yet even when I was not a confident writer, I didn’t want editors to change anything, let alone serve as mentors to their vision of my writing. In the spirit of M. Grand, the aspiring writer in Camus’s *The Plague*, I know that when I send something in—particularly if it’s a commissioned piece—I want editors to read the first paragraph, nay, the first sentence, and leap to their feet in rapturous huzzahs, “Hats off!”

Nevertheless, there are occasions when editors prevail, and their common sense corroborates what I should have done in the first place. One no-nonsense editor wrote, in response to a two-page single-space footnote of material that I was trying to shoehorn into an article where it didn’t belong, “Stick to the point!” Another editor observed that (yes) I used too many parentheses—so I switched to dashes, until another editor called me on that. Others have enhanced concision, elegance, wit. Their good advice has resonance. If I like it, I use it all the time; if I don’t, I ignore it. Yet I would not call these editors mentors. They are numerous; their advice is sporadic; often they know me essentially as a name on a manuscript, a voice in an email.

My work has also benefited, particularly in recent years, from incisive readings by outside reviewers. As usual, I choose what to accept and what to reject. A current case in point: the external referees for this essay you are reading have saved me from disaster and dowdiness. Charlotte Hogg questioned the
legitimacy of a dubious source. She was right, and I spent several (I must admit, happy) hours revising the questionable section to ensure accuracy. Both Charlotte and Janet Eldred, the other reviewer, agreed that “patchwork”—my initial integrating metaphor—was a big fat feminist cliche (they were more polite than that). “Lose it,” they said (also more politely). I've substituted “mosaic.”

In contrast, I have often found myself at odds with editors of full-length books. I’d love to have had the editorial benefit of a Maxwell Perkins, every writer’s dream—and mentor—but I suspect that my own experience is more typical. Sometimes I endure—the tarting up of design, the dumbing down of vocabulary; sometimes I rebel—don’t mess with my style or my German grandmother, who wasn’t ethnic enough for one editor. Ach! But this is a process of negotiation, not mentoring. My editors have not been at all concerned with my growth and development as a writer; their focus is consistently on larger sales. Yet I wonder how Richard Wright felt when he agreed to sever the last third of Black Boy from the original manuscript of American Hunger in order to ensure its distribution by Book of the Month Club.10

High-tech research assistants. I trust my research assistants, their candor as readers of work-in-progress. They know more than I do, especially about computer maintenance and arcane internet searches. I learn from them what I need to know and trust them to help me find the best information, to interpret it accurately, and to cite it with precision.

Colleagues and students turned friends and collaborators. When I agree to work with graduate students, I am making a commitment not just to help them pursue their own ideas, their own dreams, until they earn their degree. This full-service mentorship comes with a lifetime guarantee, renewable on request. My former graduate students and some younger as well as more seasoned colleagues, men as well as women, tell me they appreciate the help I give and the examples I set—as a teacher and scholar, wife and mother.

I feel it would be the height of hubris to set myself up as a model to be emulated, but I make it very clear why I do what I am doing (for love, for the pleasure of taking risks with subject and style, to shake up the profession, to change the lives—of my students and my readers), how I get the work done (deadlines!), how good it has to be (the best it can be in the time—always finite—I have to do the work). And they can see how my work is integrated with the rest of my life; marriage, motherhood, hospitality, daily exercise, and good deeds (sssh!) are all part of the mix. What they sometimes call mentoring I consider friendship; we are colleagues in the larger world and thrive on our mutual exchange of ideas. This takes a variety of forms: generating ideas for articles and books, and writing some together; organizing conferences and publishing volumes of the papers; founding and co-editing a professional journal; reading each others’ manuscripts with a critical eye. Sharing advice on jobs, getting and managing the good ones, getting over the bad. And just hanging out together, at meetings or on vacation. We have become each others’ best friends.
THE MOSAIC PATTERN

Would my professional life have been different with more consistent mentoring from a single person or two? It's impossible to know. I might have foregone my maverick ways and become a replica of my male mentors. Had I done so, I'd have labored in the vineyards of Milton or Arnold and never reached the promised land of autobiography, creative nonfiction, and composition studies—mainstream now but virtually invisible when I was in grad school.

The mentoring style—of receiving and of giving—that has evolved over the course of my life has to me been far more satisfying than it would have been to model my life after a single person. Indeed, Tenner's analysis of "The Pitfalls of Academic Mentorships" recommends "diversification," and concludes with the observation that "Mentoring deserves neither uncritical support nor demonization because, in the end, all mentoring is self-mentoring" (B9). I can't think of a single individual whose clone I'd like to be, though if I could wear designer genes there are a lot I'd love to try on. The pattern of the mosaic that has emerged—ever subject to change and tweaking—remains stimulating and sometimes surprising. It continues to suit me, and I'm happy to help others find their own design, their own ways of determining and altering the configuration of professional and personal options until they discover their own Platonic ideal of the best work, the best life.

NOTES

1 Nor were they to Robert Gross in History at Columbia a decade later (1).
2 Isaac quotes one dismissive woman's typical reply: "[S]top publishing articles that highlight the 'unique' problems of women in the academic workplace where they are clearly just poor individual choices, because they only hurt the chances of women who are serious about their career" (C4). This correspondent's harsh voice echoes throughout the decades of my own attempts to represent my professional struggles as generic, rather than individual, as I did in "Teaching College English as a Woman."
3 And who hasn't? The observation "No wonder academic politics are so vicious, the stakes are so low" is always with us, yes?
4 I hated that part of the book so much that after a couple of readings I learned to skip over it. I read it again in preparation for this essay; it's still loathsome.
5 In 1975 I collaborated with two counselors to write an antidote, The New Assertive Woman, whose jacket copy proclaimed "How to know what you feel, say what you mean, and get what you want." That this book has been translated into Spanish, Japanese, and German and lives to this day online via print-on-demand (Do-It-Yourself-Books) attests to how hungry women were for empowering advice. Nevertheless, the sales of this book, though far more robust than any of the twenty-five scholarly volumes I've published since then, pale in comparison with
those of Andelin (over 2 million) and Morgan (over 3.5 million), still in print and reaping rave reviews from readers.

All Andelin quotations are from http://www.snopes.com/language/document/goodwife.asp

That they are in a resurgence today is reflected in Story’s “Many Women at Elite Colleges Set Career Path to Motherhood” (see also Story, “Background”). So, sadly, are contemporary updates of Andelin and Morgan such as Laura Doyle’s *The Surrendered Wife* and Lysa TerKeurst’s *Capture His Heart*. Like their predecessors, both are Bible-based.

That these expectations prevail in some places even today is documented by Melanie Springer Mock’s experiences of adopting two infants while she was on the tenure track at a “conservative Christian university”—and a Quaker school, at that. God appears to have spoken in decontextualized “sound bites about the virtues of subjugating women.... My decision to continue working after becoming a mother obviously transgresses what they see as a biblical mandate: Men are to be the heads of their households; women are made to nurture children; and only men—and, to a lesser degree, childless women—can successfully operate in academe.... Because the church has long held that a woman’s sphere is in the home, and because church tradition is sacrosanct, we must uphold the ideal of the stay-at-home mother” (2).

The cognoscenti will recognize that Utley was at Ohio State, not Michigan. I spent a year in exile there, having initially been told I couldn’t apply to Michigan’s doctoral program. “Your grades aren’t good enough,” said the advisor. “But,” I protested. “I have a 3.95 and the catalog says people can get in with a 3.5.” “What that means, young lady,” he replied, “is that women need a 4.0; Men can get in with 3.0.”

One editor removed most of the three and four-syllable words from *The New Assertive Woman* and in the process made it a best seller. Other editors have tried to turn innovative textbooks into clones of competing works—with dubious results. Still a different editor red pencilled all the wit and flow from my prose until I insisted on—and got—a different editor who liked my style. And then there was the high-strung editor who, after a year’s delay, returned my lyrical-yet-scholarly forty-page introduction to a World War II diary I’d edited with savage XXs slashed in #1 pencil across every page—symbolic, I realized, of her impending divorce. (Rather than slug out the changes, word-by-word, I simply wrote a new and, I must admit, much better introduction.) The list goes on.
WORKS CITED


