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# Women climbing wage ladder

Despite gaining footholds at top, they still occupy nearly 70 per cent of bottom-rung jobs

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TORONTO – At the Toronto District School Board, the principals have stopped dancing.

Not so long ago, when the senior public-school administrators got together for their annual fall conference, the split of men and women was almost even, so the principals would hold a dinner-dance.

No longer. After women started tipping the balance as Toronto school principals in the early 1990s, there was a sudden shortage of male partners.

"There were so many more women than men at the conferences, we weren't having dances any more," says Tanya Sterioff, principal for the past six years at Ossington-Old Orchard Public School. "The poor guys would have their feet danced off."

The movement of women into principals' offices in Toronto appears to be part of a bigger shift taking hold across Canada.

According to 1996 census data released yesterday by Statistics Canada, more women joined the ranks of the 25 highest-paid professions between 1990 and 1995, and female school principals and lawyers led the charge.

While women held 17 per cent of the jobs with the fattest pay cheques at the beginning of the decade, they flocked into all 25 top professions over the past few years, from doctors and professors to pilots and commissioned police officers, filling 22 per cent of those jobs on average by 1995.

At the same time, women continued in 1995 to dominate the lowest-paying professions in equal numbers as 1990, holding 68 per cent of jobs that include nannies, sewing-machine operators, and early-childhood educators.

Even with 60 per cent of classrooms led by female teachers, the administrative offices in Toronto schools were male bastions as recently as 1990, when nearly four out of five principals were men. By 1997, 62 per cent of the 120 elementary-school principals with the Toronto board were women – a rough match with the proportion of female teachers on staff.

With a salary of \$85,000 a year (at the high end for a Toronto principal) Ms. Sterioff considers herself a bargain. A normal work week runs at least 50 hours, not in-

cluding the usual round of evening meetings.

The census data show there were more female principals and school administrators in 1995 than ever before – 8,300, a surge from 5,305 in 1990. Their average salaries rose from \$57,779 to \$60,394 (in 1995 dollars). Meanwhile, the number of male administrators slipped to 14,310 from 14,700; their incomes fell, too, to an average of \$66,837 from 1990's \$67,087.

John Gartley, senior research analyst with Statscan's census income statistics division, suggests the rise in both involvement and incomes of women in the most lucrative professions appears to be a natural evolution as high-paid, long-serving men start to retire and women begin climbing the income ladder.

At the bottom end of the jobs, among the low-paid hairstylists, farm workers, and cashiers, 20-year-old Claire Yao stands behind the cash register at Baroli Caff  in Toronto's Eaton Centre, ringing in gourmet coffee and \$6 sandwiches for shoppers.

She works 30 hours a week for \$7 an hour (15 cents above Ontario's minimum wage), with no benefits.

"It's hard to find work. There's nothing out there. It's depressing, actually," says Ms. Yao, who lives with her parents and plans to return to school in September at McGill University. "And what I'm doing is pretty demoralizing work."

According to the census, Ms. Yao's job as a food-service counter attendant is the third lowest-paying in Canada, providing an average salary of \$15,487 a year in 1995.

Of the 25 occupations at the bottom of the scale, women dominate all but five. There are 16,670 women working in jobs like Ms. Yao's, compared with 5,550 men doing so. And while the women made an average of \$14,681 a year, the men took home \$17,912.

"These are increasingly becoming the jobs that people take," said Paul Clifford, president of a Toronto local with the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union.

## Feeling poorer? You're right

Census figures (in constant 1995 dollars) show incomes fell

### Top 10 highest and lowest paying occupations

10 highest paying occupations	Men	Women
Judges	\$128,791	\$117,707
Specialist physicians	137,019	86,086
General practitioners and family physicians	116,750	81,512
Dentists	109,187	71,587
Senior managers:		
• Goods production, utilities, transportation and construction	102,971	58,463
• Financial, communications carriers and other business services	104,715	71,270
• Trade, broadcasting and other services	84,237	48,651
Lawyers and Quebec notaries	89,353	60,930
Primary production managers (except agriculture)	78,421	48,479
Securities agents, investment dealers and traders	90,391	47,323
10 lowest paying occupations		
Sewing-machine operators	\$20,664	\$17,340
Cashiers	20,557	16,977
Ironing, pressing and finishing operations	19,297	16,499
Artisans and craftpersons	20,555	13,565
Bartenders	18,899	14,940
Harvesting labourers	18,683	14,465
Service attendants	16,520	14,947
Food-service counter attendants and food preparers	17,912	14,681
Food and beverage servers	18,192	13,861
Babysitters, nannies and parents' helpers	15,106	12,662

The article EM9806 reprinted above is the second of six articles used in Figure 2.2f of the STAT 332 Course Materials.