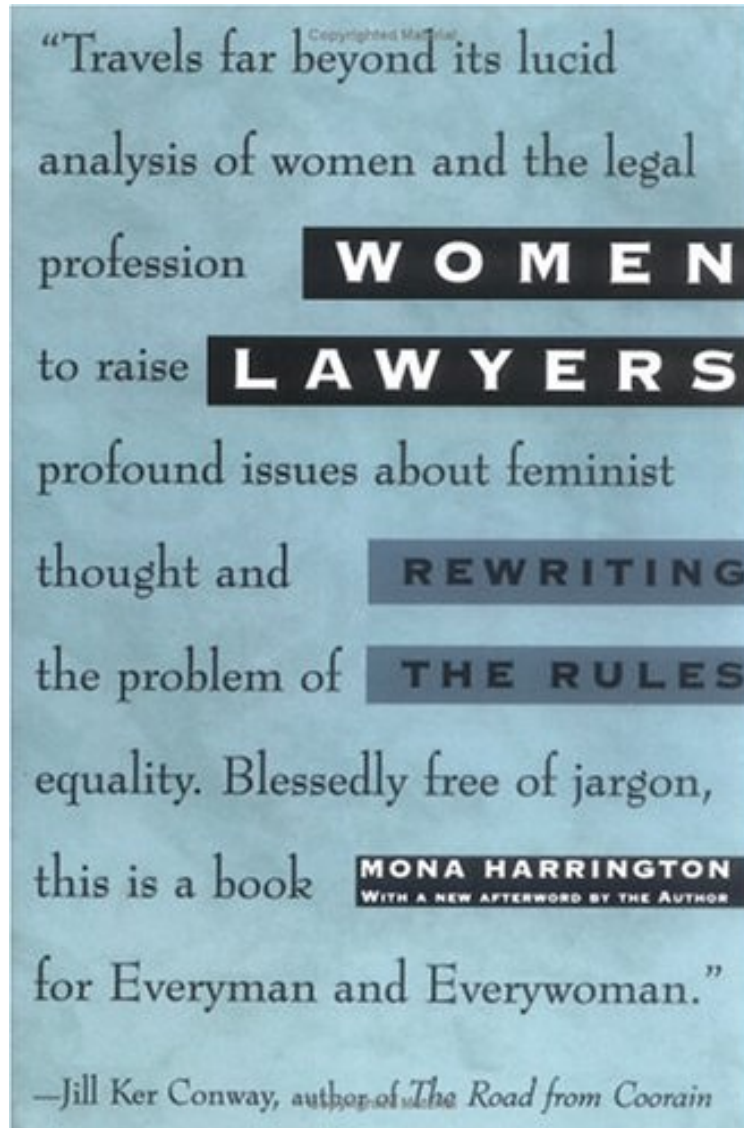


Women Lawyers: Rewriting the Rules

Mona Harrington

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Mona Harrington : Women Lawyers: Rewriting the Rules before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Women Lawyers: Rewriting the Rules:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Great book, but object to basic premiseBy A CustomerThis book is a good buy. It discusses exactly what the title suggests: women and the law. However the book goes even further that that: it delves into issues affecting all women such as motherhood and the role of feminism in general. The author states she will analyze women in the law while focusing mainly on Harvard grads working in large law firms--

supposedly because they have the greatest ability to affect the greatest change. I, personally, don't believe this assumption to be correct, but it doesn't affect the impact of this book. The author, herself, seems to dismiss her premise later on as she discusses the impacts of women in many other areas of law including governmental offices and politics in general. Buy this book if you are looking for some dissecting of the role of women in a patriarchial legal system.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great Read for Women in the Legal FieldBy Kerri NashMona Harrington not only asks, but analyzes the right questions about women lawyers. I enjoyed the thorough analysis of the topic. Great read.

A must-read for every woman in the midst of contemplating a career in law, and for the men who work with them. The very presence of women in law normal as it may seem to us today signals revolutionary change in a social order that for centuries entrusted control over its rules to men. Mona Harrington examines both the problems women meet when they claim equal authority as rule makers and the impact of new perspectives and issues that women bring with them into the profession. On the basis of more than one hundred interviews with women lawyers, judges, and law school professors and students, and through the stories of their daily experiences, Harrington pinpoints and analyzes the key factors holding women back in a profession still dominated by males among them the mens club ambience, the focus on billable hours, sexual harassment and the inequality it perpetuates, lingering unequal division of labor at home, and hostile media images of women in positions of power. She shows us what life is like for women lawyers in practice today and how their dilemmas reflect the social issues of our time. She gives us the voices of women who have adapted to the cultural codes of corporate law and women who have broken them; women who have successfully balanced their professional and private lives and women who feel trapped by the combination of long hours at the office and full responsibility at home. She introduces us to women in new and alternative firms, on the faculties of small public law schools, in in-house legal departments, and in prosecutors offices and courtroom women who are devising new rules and legal theories to bring about change.

From Publishers Weekly Drawing on interviews with more than 100 female lawyers, most of them graduates of Harvard Law School, attorney Harrington (coauthor of *Women of Academe*) presents an absorbing mosaic of the issues impeding advancement of her subjects. Women lawyers, she argues plausibly, "are on dangerous ground," connected to both the male establishment and the majority of women, yet anchored by neither. She describes the professional, legal and social strictures that hamper women at corporate law firms. Her account of the tensions at law schools is interesting but brief, as is her survey of media representation of lawyers. More trenchant are her expositions of father/ daughter roles as they affect a woman lawyer, women's style of dress and the stresses of the competitive litigation ethos. She finds some progress on the periphery--women creating more collegial firms, or publicizing the pressures of law school on their personal lives. A few of her topics deserve further analysis, but Harrington provides much food for thought. Author tour. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal The old order of the sexes is breaking apart, but the new is not yet in place. The law is at the center of this reorganization, and women lawyers are powerful agents in it, whether they intend to be or not. Harrington, a lawyer and former professor of political science, interviewed over 100 attorneys, all graduates of Harvard Law School, and elicited information on their personal and professional lives. At issue are two questions: What stands in the way of equal opportunity for women lawyers, and how are women lawyers using the authority they have to advance the equality of women. The book is richly illustrated with examples and anecdotes, and the style is warm, intelligent, and personable. Highly recommended for women's studies and legal collections.- Elizabeth Fielder Olson, Archer Greiner Lib., Haddonfield, N.J. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Harrington paints a disturbing picture of the current situation in the American legal arena: good ol' boy networks, insurmountable billable hours, and general hostility toward change--particularly change set in motion by women. Through more than 100 interviews with female graduates from Harvard Law School, Harrington describes the frustrations, the stress, and even the immense successes these women have found. She recognizes the statistic that currently nearly 50 percent of law students are women, but she counters with the fact that women at a much higher rate drop out of practicing law when their job infringes too much on their often unavoidable role as nurturer. Particularly insightful is the chapter on how the media aggravate the problem. For instance, she alludes to the Zo{ }e Baird nomination flack, where the media suddenly became interested in child care, though the issue never surfaced during the hundreds of male candidates' confirmation hearings. But rather than endlessly bemoan the plight of women, this author offers practical solutions for how the industry can change for the better, and not just for the better of women. She opines that improved conditions in the field of law could only help all those involved, including, yes, even white men. An excellent and thorough look at a field loaded with possibilities but burdened by tradition. Mary Frances Wilkens