

# MATURITY

*Hi. My name is Martha DuBois. I'm 14 years old, and I live with my two older brothers, my stepfather and my mother. My mom is 51 years old.*

She has worked for the same publishing company for 25 years. She started out as a research assistant.

After four years she moved up to an editor's job helping writers. She's good at what she does, and she's great working with other people. I should know—she's my mom!

The boss in her department just retired, and my mom has applied for his job. But she's worried that she may not get it because she's a woman.

Imagine—being told that you're not right for something because you're a woman instead of a man! At my school the head of the student council is a girl, and no one thinks anything about it.

But in my mom's company most of the top people are men. And some of the editors she has worked with moved up to bigger jobs years ago. My mom says that society over the years has traditionally favored putting men in certain positions like manager. There is a stereotype that women don't do some jobs well.

This makes no sense to me, but mom says "sexism" still exists in the work world, even with people trying to change it.

In many companies, she said, men are paid more than women for the same

work. And my mom pointed out that women are rarely promoted to the top jobs of the biggest companies. A story in the newspaper said less than a dozen women have been named the chief executives in America's 500 largest corporations.

One thing that is changing is that many jobs are opening up to women that used to be



Meet Martha. Her Mom is trying to advance at work.

closed. I looked at newspapers, magazines television, and found examples that my mom said didn't used to be true. For instance, women are no longer portrayed as just housewives on TV shows, but as women with families and jobs from doctor to flight attendant. Ads for Saturn cars feature women not only buying but selling cars, too.

Now if only Mom's boss thinks that way when he fills the job she wants. Right now we can only wait.

## ASK MARTHA'S MOTHER

*I don't understand about "glass ceilings" and "cement ceilings" that I hear about in the work place. Can you explain them?*

Today, women are an accepted part of the American work force. But in many fields there is history that women can only go so far up the career ladder. In the Wall Street's industry of finance and stocks, women have bumped into what is called "the glass ceiling." This means they reach a level in their careers where they can see the top jobs, but they can't get past the barrier as men can. It has not just happened in finance, but in other service industries as well. In construction and engineering, the ceiling has often been called the "cement ceiling." They both mean essentially the same thing.

## DIVERSITY TIDBITS

- In December 1993, the University of Pennsylvania became the first Ivy League college to name a woman president when Judith Rodin accepted the position. Only 12 percent of the presidents at 3,200 colleges are women—even though women account for half of the population and 52 percent of all college undergraduates. Only 9 percent of college presidents are minorities—even though 18 percent of undergraduates are minorities.
- In 1994, a benchmark in women's progress in American business was achieved. For the first time, more than half of the nation's largest corporations had at least one woman on their board of directors.