



Newsweek's History Includes Pathbreaking Gender Discrimination Case

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When *Newsweek*/Daily Beast Editor-in-Chief Tina Brown recently announced that the print edition of *Newsweek* will cease publication at the end of 2012 after a nearly 80-year history, the fact that a female editor-in-chief broke the news likely was not lost on former *Newsweek* staffer [Lynn Povich](#). Ms. Povich, one of the leaders of a 1970s sex discrimination case against *Newsweek*, is the author of a newly released book that lays out all the details of the struggle by women at the magazine to rise beyond the role of researcher to which they had been relegated in the pre-Title VII era.

The book, "[The Good Girls Revolt: How the Women of Newsweek Sued their Bosses and Changed the Workplace](#)," provides an insider's account of one of the earliest class actions by women seeking equal opportunities at the elite level of journalism. Ms. Povich, a graduate of Vassar who started as a secretary in the Paris bureau of *Newsweek*, was one of 46 women who joined forces in 1970 to charge *Newsweek* with sex discrimination in hiring and promotion. Their cause was led by civil rights lawyer Eleanor Holmes Norton, and the book is at its best when it describes some of the tense face-to-face negotiations that were aimed at opening pathways to promotion for women.

Ms. Povich, who in 1975 became the first female senior editor at *Newsweek*, also provides interesting insights into the conflicted feelings of the women as they decided to air their grievances in public, when clearly they also feared rocking the boat and challenging societal norms in the "Mad Men" era.

The book also includes a short where-are-they-now section on some of the women who were part of the case, sharing their thoughts on the impact the collective action had on their lives. The book not only provides an interesting first-person account of the challenges women faced as they sought change in

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their workplace, it also serves to preserve the history of early Title VII actions.