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Legal Victory for Working Women

Susan Ellicott

London Times

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THE TIMES

1333 H Street, NW, Suite 440

Washington, D.C. 20005

Telephone: (202) 347-7659

From the ~~U.S.~~ Editor

June 17th, 1990.

Dear Ann,

Many thanks for your time and help. Apologies that this took so long to arrive, but we have to wait a few before receiving copies of the newspaper.

See you at the next block party, perhaps.

Best regards,

Sue.

Legal victory for working women

From Susan Ellicott, Washington 5/17/90

IN A landmark sex discrimination case, a Washington judge has ordered Price Waterhouse, one of the world's largest accounting firms, to award one of its coveted partnerships to a woman ruled out for the job seven years ago because colleagues thought she was too "macho".

America's working women often claim to have made bigger strides in the workplace than their European sisters, but complain that men still have too many of the senior corporate jobs at management level. Only 27 of Price Waterhouse's 900 partners are women and Ms Ann Hopkins, aged 46, was the only female nominee among 88 candidates for partnership when the firm considered her in 1982.

Her case is the first in which a court has compelled a company to make a person a partner as a remedy for discrimination for reasons of race or sex. An investigation into her failure to become a partner found that the firm passed her over because colleagues disliked her personal manner and suggested she should attend "charm school".

A lawyer representing Ms Hopkins, who now holds a senior management post at the World Bank here, hailed the court's decision this week as a ray of hope for all minorities striving for equal opportunities in America. A judge also awarded Ms Hopkins about \$400,000 (£240,000) in back pay for earnings lost as a result of illegal "sexual stereotyping". The amount is the average salary earned today by management consultants at the firm who were made partners when Ms Hopkins was turned down.

Ms Hopkins, who is married with a family, has not yet said whether she will go back to Price Waterhouse, although the Washington judge has said that if she does he will order the firm not to retaliate against her for suing it.

The judge's decision is almost certain to fuel intense

For the past decade, law and accounting firms have agonized over whether they could be legally forced to give partnerships to victims of discrimination.

Ambitious lawyers for influential law firms in Washington routinely work 12-hour days seven days a week as they aim for the top, and many firms think that the judicial system should not intervene in decisions on partnership which are based on elaborate personal considerations.

After only four years at the company when proposed for partnership, Ms Hopkins had brought in more business to Price Waterhouse than any of her rival nominees. The firm told her in early 1983 that it had put her nomination on hold but did not explain why. Ms Hopkins resigned a year later and sued the firm for sex discrimination, thinking it had given her "an irrational explanation for a bad business decision".

Only later, when her case was in litigation, did she discover that the firm had bowed to partners' comments "that I needed to go to charm school, that I was too macho, that I was overcompensating to being a woman". Her case last year reached the Supreme Court, on the issue of the standards which employers and claimants in discrimination suits must prove.

Bush po to backt on camp tax ple

From Susan Ellicott, Wa

AMERICANS are frantically trying to reread their President's lips. Until last week, he was the leader who promised: "Read my lips! No new taxes." Now, the pledge which helped carry him to the White House looks shaky following his decision to try to sort out his country's budget woes.

This, Washington concluded, signalled that taxes would be on the table. In an attempt to calm the ensuing panic, Bush Administration officials have said that taxes are not necessarily on the agenda. They are simply not off it. The White House has refused to say whether the President is ready to talk about raising taxes.

Mr Bush's decision to tackle the nation's deficit marks a reversal of his position three months ago when he told Congress he was not contemplating bipartisan negotiations to reach a deal. Since then, economic conditions have forced him to reconsider.

Government revenues have fallen while rising interest rates have boosted spending. Administration officials say that Mr Bush, spurred by

growing about simply right for risk of on his The been u dress th some t aim w packag revenue the au across-cuts th Grami reducti Mr avoid (The lav (£39 b the fed would off spe other without priorit Trac have l lower crats h their raise taxati Alre istrati the while ing to forcinc consid Admi accus Cong the t respo Presic The Bush' taxes' incon perts Adm raised taxes "user last a tick