

## Unequal pay for teachers is just wrong

How can pay be unequal for men and women teachers of identical experience when there is only one uniform pay scale at each Kansas school district?

Each Kansas school board negotiates a salary base for teachers, which is the starting salary for a teacher fresh out of college. This scale then extends upward in steps, adding pay increments, often \$500 each year. Horizontally, the scale adds a roughly similar amount for increases in college credit, usually with steps at bachelor's degree plus 15 and 30 hours, master's degree, and 15 and 30 credit hour toward a doctorate.

Larger, rich school districts may load more pay for advanced degrees because they want a more highly trained and specialized faculty. Rural schools that need broadly trained teachers often load their salary scale with greater increments for staying over time.

But there is only one salary scale – not two separate scales for men and women. So why do surveys of public school teachers – based on the same years of experience and education – show an average lower pay for women doing the same job?

The answer is not in added pay for coaching or sponsoring student government or other activities, because those are paid as “add-ons.” And while historically more money was available for coaching boy's sports than girl's sports, that disparity is shrinking because of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. That law prohibits sex discrimination in education programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. And that is having a great payoff for our women teachers. But salary surveys exclude those ancillary duties.

Some years ago, a veteran woman teacher sat down and explained her situation to me. Her husband was in an industry that moved its offices. She therefore had to leave the school where she had been an exemplary science teacher for over a decade. She applied in the district where she now lived. This is common for teaching spouses. Teaching is considered a portable occupation. And science teachers are in demand nearly everywhere.

In her interview, the discussion went as follows: “Mrs. Smith (not her real name). We really are impressed with your teaching record and really need you here. But we have two applicants fresh out of student teaching. We know they will not bring your experience, but our school is on a tight budget and we simply cannot afford you at your level of 12 years experience. Now if you would only claim two years of experience, we could offer you the job.”

So she was faced with a dilemma. If she wanted a job teaching in her new home district, she would have to take a pay cut of over \$5,000 a year. And she would be shorted that amount on the pay scale, compounded for the rest of her career – over \$50,000 a decade.

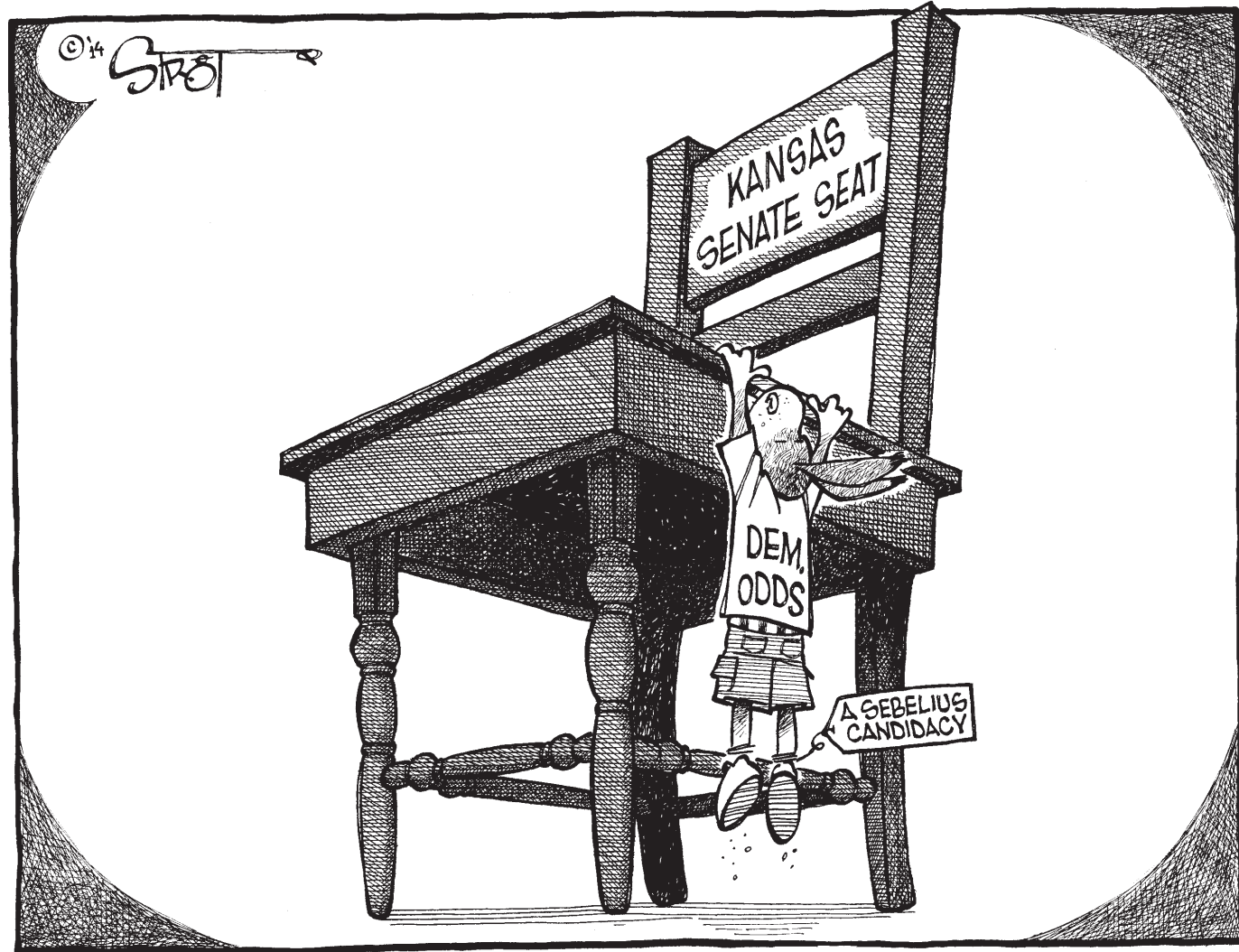
This practice is wrong. Unethical. Despicable. And that school district was not in financial trouble. This coercion often does not occur when men teachers move to new districts. This reflects the male chauvinism of an older generation of male administrators who only see the man as the “bread winner.” Yesiree! Nursin' and teachin' is “women's work” in their eyes.

This attitude deserves utter contempt. As more women move into administrative positions, this practice should decline. But even if it were to stop today, it would take 40 years for the pay disparity and injustice that it causes to flush from our system.

Unfortunately, there are simple-minded politicians today who wave the single pay scales and proclaim that there is no distinction on paper between pay for men and women teachers and therefore no discrepancy. Their ignorance of what has occurred in the field perpetuates this injustice.

John Richard Schrock

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## Hardest on those left behind

This is a hard column to write. My oldest brother, Bob, died early Saturday morning. It's hard, not because he's gone, but because we're going to miss him. It's always hardest on those left behind.

Even though he was 19 years older than myself, I have many fond memories of my brother. I have a picture of him holding me when I was a baby just before he left to join the Navy. My mother said he thought I was pretty special. His children were just a few years younger than I was and as a child he was more their father than my brother.

He came to my house for a visit when I was about 28 years old. He and my kid's dad were outside doing something when I called them in for dinner. Bob asked, “She cooked dinner all by herself?” Guess he still thought of me as a little kid.

My brother was probably the smartest man I ever knew. Being a pilot you knew he had to be above average, but Bob was a quiet scholar who's intelligence surfaced in diverse ways. He was well-read and could discuss any subject with ease. He worked the New York Times crossword puzzle in ink. At the drop of a hat, he could recite the entire poem about “The Cremation of

### Out Back Carolyn Plotts



Sam McGee.” No literary masterpiece, but a lengthy poem he learned in grade school. He knew “real” poetry too. I always vowed that if I made it onto “Who Wants to be a Millionaire,” he would be my phone-a-friend. He owned a T-shirt with this message printed on the front: “I drank free all day at the Boston Bar.” It may not have been the Boston Bar, but it was a bar in Boston, that challenged their patrons to answer Trivial Pursuit questions. If they answered correctly, they got a free drink. He had traveled the world and studied anything that interested him. He made great deviled eggs and he taught me to play Sudoku. Bob and I took a few trips together. About four years ago, when our sister first moved to Florida we flew down to see her. He had the airline passes and knew his way around airports. He even got us upgraded to first class, which

was a first for me. Bob was a four-time cancer survivor and had vowed if it ever came back he would not seek treatment. Two weeks ago he called to say he was in the hospital and in his words, “it didn't look good.” He called back the next day to tell us the doctor had confirmed his diagnosis and he had a very rare, very aggressive, very fast-moving kind of cancer. Two weeks was the time frame his doctor had given him.

Two weeks. It's hard to wrap your head around that. Half a month. Fourteen days. Not nearly enough time to prepare yourself. But in Bob's pragmatic way, he accepted the idea, got his business in order, arranged for Hospice care and settled in for his last chapter. We all had time to go see him and say our good-byes. His children were with him and he was surrounded by people who loved him. His family is comforted with the knowledge that he was “good with God.”

Yes, we'll miss him, but we're better people for having known him. Perhaps my daughter, Halley, gave him the most fitting tribute when she said, “Nobody lived a cooler life than Uncle Bob.”

## Will marijuana ever be legal in Kansas?

The question on everyone's lips seems to be, “When will Kansas legalize marijuana?”

And the answer is as easy as it is simple: “Not in our lifetime.” Marijuana undoubtedly can be bad for you. It can make people lazy and rob them of any desire to do anything. It may alter the brain. It certainly can make people act stupid.

But it's nowhere near as dangerous as several legal substances, including alcohol, which makes people mean and figures in a huge proportion of police calls, and tobacco, which kills you.

We gave up on prohibition for alcohol not because it was the wrong thing to do, but because it turned out to be impossible. All it did was create an era of violence unrivaled by anything our country had seen in decades, except for the more recent “war on drugs.” That and help the Mob finance Las Vegas.

We learned the hard way that you can't ban something people want and can get. Gin you could make in a bathtub, marijuana you can grow in the basement. And let's not kid ourselves, we've lost the “war.”

Colorado raised the white flag and started collecting taxes on the stuff instead. When legislators get a load of the potential rakeoff, other revenue-starved states will follow suit. The progression will be like that on state lotteries, where the states fell in line one by

### On the Prairie Dog Steve Haynes



one and, eventually, muscled the Mob right out of the old “numbers” racket, which we now call Lotto.

The definition of sin, it seems, depends entirely on who is making the money.

But when will Kansas tumble? Well, we adopted prohibition earlier than most states. That came in 1881; nationwide prohibition didn't begin until 1919, and the country abandoned the “great experiment” in 1933, just 14 years later.

Kansas didn't fully repeal prohibition until 1987, when voters eliminated the constitutional declaration that “the open saloon shall be forever banned.” In fact, Kansas never did ratify the 21st Amendment repealing prohibition, and likely never will.

As William Allen White is thought to have said, “Kansas would vote dry as long as they could stagger to the polls.”

Kansas did legalize package-store sales of liquor in 1948, 15 years after the national end of prohibition. That might give us some guidance as to

when troublesome laws against simple possession of marijuana might be relaxed here.

“On-premises” consumption, or liquor by the drink, continued to be illegal for another 39 years. During that time, Kansas law decreed that liquor could only be consumed in private places, such as fraternal clubhouses, and at home. Exceptions were made for “3.2” beer, which the Legislature declared not to be “an alcoholic beverage,” and sharpies began to push the definition of a private club.

I remember when the bartender at the country club or the VFW had to keep separate bottles for each customer, mixing our folks' drinks only from their stock. Later, the state legalized “community” bottles owned by the club as a whole, and still later, virtual liquor by the drink for clubs.

As of two years ago, the state still had 13 “dry” counties where liquor by the drink is banned under the county option law. Package sales apparently are legal statewide, however.

So you could say it took 54 years for Kansas to mostly repeal prohibition, but after 80 years, we still have dry counties. You think we'll be any faster to legalize dope?

Ha! This was the home of Carrie Nation, after all.

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