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Marilyn L. Grady
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The conversation about "First Generation College Students" is dominant in the university setting. At the November 2003 annual meeting of the University Council for Educational Administration, we were fortunate to engage in special discussions about women. In one session convened by Norma Mertz, the topic of women who are "firsts" as professors of educational administration was highlighted. This discussion will undoubtedly lead to further exploration of the experiences of these "first" women professors of educational administration. In another session, Nancy Mims convened women department chairs and deans for a conversation about their experiences. Once again, the issue of being a "first" was evident in the discussion. Exploration of the experiences of these pioneering women also needs to be conducted.

The status of being a "first" is not limited to women in educational leadership roles. On January 12, 2004, Kathleen Blanco was sworn in as governor of Louisiana, another "first."

Closer to home for us, a front page headline in the January 11, 2004 Lincoln Journal Star announced that Equity in Gender Still Lags at NU. According to the article, "UNL has gained four female professors since 1996-97, a number ranking it dead last in its own 11-school peer group, according to information compiled from an American Association of University Professors survey" (p. 1). As part of this grim record, there are many "firsts" in different departments on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s campus who could describe their experiences.

The manuscripts in this issue of The Journal of Women in Educational Leadership also reflect the "first" phenomena. Wolverton and Macdonald report on their study of the career paths to the superintendency in the Northwest. The superintendency is described by the U.S. Census Bureau as the most male-dominated executive position of any profession in the United States (Bjork, 2000).

Helterbran and Rieg describe the barriers women experience as they seek positions in educational leadership. Their manuscript focuses on women as school principals. They provide suggestions for those who seek principal positions.
Uerling discusses two 2003 Supreme Court decisions considered challenges to the use of racial preferences in the admissions policies of two different colleges at the University of Michigan. Uerling's conclusion, "Surely the day will come when race and ethnicity will be of no more significance than any other personal characteristic. But that day has yet to arrive."

Jean-Marie notes that "Black women are subjected to both racism and sexism; those who achieve privileged status are also the targets of classism." Her manuscript focuses on Black women administrators in Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Taken together, these manuscripts are a vivid reminder of the equity work that demands our attention.