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## Hanson, Katherine, Vivian Guilfoy and Sarita Pillai: More than Title IX : how equity in education has shaped the nation

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**Hanson, Katherine, Vivian Guilfooy and Sarita Pillai: *More than Title IX : how equity in education has shaped the nation***

Lanham, Md. : Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009. 339 p. ISBN 9780742566408 (hbk. : alk. paper)

*Reviewed by Monica Teixeira de Sousa, J.D., Professor of Law, New England Law | Boston.*

The authors of *More Than Title IX* provide a nuanced and bottom up account of the efforts undertaken by individual women and men to demand equal opportunities for women and girls in schools and institutions of higher learning. This book succeeds in transmitting a broad vision of gender equity in education, one that refuses to be confined to the classroom, the sports field, or the halls of academe. Instead, the reader is carefully shown how the struggle for equity in education has transformed every aspect of our society, dramatically altered the course of lives of women and men and prompted a meteoric expansion of the expectations of both girls and boys for what they may do in life.

Although a thoroughly researched historical account of the various political and legislative steps involved in the passage of Title IX of the 1972 Educational Amendments is presented early on in the book, the heart of the book is devoted to understanding the experiences of the individuals whose hard work and courage continues to enable the successful implementation of the seismic changes in law and policy that occurred in the sixties and seventies. This book succeeds by offering a rare glimpse into the personal and professional experiences of the myriad educators, activists and policymakers striving daily to make the law's promise a reality. Through a series of interviews with gender equity leaders in a variety of professional settings, the carefully edited *More Than Title IX* succeeds in providing a unique and complete narrative of the struggle for gender equity that begins rather than ends with the passage of Title IX. The individual narratives convey the message that while a change in the law is not enough in and of itself to transform the culture and habits of a people, it is also clearly the indispensable starting point. In an accessible and persuasive manner, this book affirms the often-quoted jurist Roscoe Pound's famous pronouncement that "[l]aw makes habits, it does not wait for them to grow."

One particularly inspiring interviewee is Harilyn Rousso, president of Disabilities Unlimited Consulting Services. Through her honest and insightful account of her experiences growing up female and with a disability, Harilyn sheds light on the complexities and challenges of achieving gender equity for women and girls with disabilities. Her narrative reveals that the fight for gender equity is still being waged and that much work remains to be done. Harilyn raises the profile of issues such as gender bias in education for students with disabilities, and high rates of sexual harassment

against girls with disabilities in schools. In fact, one of the common threads woven throughout the book is that whether and how we choose to speak about issues impacts the likelihood that we will succeed in addressing them.

The authors close by providing final thoughts on the holistic approach needed to bring about long-lasting societal change such as has been experienced in the area of gender equity. The transformative role of education and the power of community are two of the pillars discussed by the authors as essential to success. It is no coincidence that an expansive revolution in gender equity impacting the professional, home, political, public and private spheres was precipitated by a legal requirement imposed on schools. After all, where are individuals taught how to participate in a democratic society, to interact and cooperate with their fellow citizens, irrespective of background, gender, disability status and other differences? The answer must be what Eleanor Roosevelt stated in 1958 on the tenth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. "Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home - so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world."

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