

Lynn M. Roncco

Cindy Potkul
U.S. History
November 30, 1983

Lynn M. Roncco is a former employee at Stauffer Chemical Co. in Green River, Wyoming. Being a female, she was a minority in the wage role force for two and one-half years, until recently laid off in May 1983. However, at this point in time, she is eagerly anticipating being rehired since she is now first on the recall list. I chose to interview Lynn for the purpose of determining how a female fits into a male dominated work force. Also, I wanted to find out what motivated her to obtain this position and her desire to return to it.

As a Wyoming native, Lynn was born Nov. 10, 1952 in Thermopolis, Wyoming. She attended grades K-12 in Thermopolis public schools. In 1976, she obtained a bachelor's degree in Physical Education at the University of Wyoming. She then travelled to the University of Kentucky where she graduated in 1976 with a master's degree in Physical Education with an emphasis in training.

After graduation, she married in August, 1977 and moved to San Francisco with her husband. She worked as a pharmacist assistant for one year. In 1978, Lynn and her husband returned to Laramie, Wyoming where the opportunity arose for them to operate their own sporting goods store. As assistant manager, Lynn was able to put her education to work but only for a short two-year period. Conflict of interest came about in what merchandise should be purchased and they decided to quit their managerial positions.

At this time, she and her husband knew there were jobs available in Rock Springs and moved here. Lynn applied at several of the soda ash companies before being hired on at Stauffer Chemical Co. in Sept.

of 1980. As an hourly wage worker, her first position was town runner. As a town runner, she used a company vehicle to pick up supplies in Green River and Rock Springs for three months. After working her second position on the cleanup crew, she moved into the shipping department as "A bulkloader". Her foreman and fellow employees were skeptical about a female handling this job for good reasons. In the past, the females who chose this position were not capable of handling the job and did not hold it for very long. She found this job to be her first challenge not only emotionally but physically. As one of the few females in the plant (appr. 1 female to 30 males in a work force of 300 or more) she was even more determined to prove herself. At this point in time, she found that she needed to develop a tough-skinned image in her job position. She recalls remarks from the older men that she didn't belong in the plant but she didn't let these stop her from doing her work. As a bulkloader, she was responsible for controlling the railroad switches, spotting the railroad cars on the scale, setting brakes, closing and sealing the bottom dump gates. A forty pound bar was used to close the gates which made it physically most difficult of all her responsibilities.

Lynn took on the challenge and came through with flying colors while gaining her foreman's and fellow employees' respect. After an eight hour shift, she goes home feeling a sense of accomplishment and feels she's put in a hard day's work. Being a conscientious worker during her 2-1/2 years, she feels it did not pay off. Although she had an excellent work record and low absenteeism, she was laid off

on seniority basis. With no union, she was dismayed that they chose to lay off in this manner. And worse, they did not lay off salary employees on seniority basis but on merit evaluations and past work record. When asked whether she would have thought having a union would have been beneficial, she was not sure since she has never been in a union to know how they operate. She feels strongly that Stauffer hurt themselves since this was the opportunity to get rid of the employees who have high absenteeism and poor work records.

One year after her working as a bulkloader, she and her husband were divorced. Whether or not it was because of their different work schedules resulting in less time together is not known for sure. But she continued working which became most important in her daily life. Being laid off in May 1983, was a very difficult time for her. Almost seven months are gone and she has not been rehired at this time. Originally, she was number five on the recall list, and at this time is number one on the list. Number one reason for wanting to return to work is for the money. A second reason for wanting to return is because she enjoyed her job. She feels she fits in very well with fellow employees and even good friends with a few. She did not experience any verbal or physical harassment on the job and does not know of any incidents involving any other females. She turned down severance pay to be placed on the recall list. Even with the professional degrees she holds, she wants to work at Stauffer as a laborer since she could never make as much money in her profession as she does at Stauffer.

After eight months being laid off, I am happy to report that Lynn was called back today, December 5, 1983.