



You  
Make the  
Choice!

Yukon Women in  
Science, Trades  
& Technology

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BIOLOGY \* FLORISTRY \* ANIMAL CARE \*  
TECHNOLOGY \* PHARMACOLOGY \*  
MATHEMATICALS \* EDITING \* WELDING \*  
FITTING \* COURT REPORTING \* DIESEL  
MECHANICS \* GENETICS \* FOOD SCIENCE \*  
\* PHYSIOTHERAPY \* MUNICIPAL PLANNING  
AND DEVELOPMENT \* PHILOSOPHY \*  
CARPENTRY\* BRICKLAYING\*  
ARCHAEOLOGY \* CRIMINOLOGY \* FISH AND  
WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT \* LINGUISTICS \*  
MEDICINE \* FORESTRY \* PRINTING  
MANAGEMENT \* OPTOMETRY \*  
METEOROLOGY \* ANIMAL CARE \* SALES  
MANAGEMENT \* ZOOLOGY \* URBAN  
PLANNING \* CHEMICAL \* ENGINEERING  
TECHNOLOGY \* LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE \*  
PHARMACY ASSISTANCE \* COMPUTER-  
AIDED DRAFTING \* AUTOMOTIVE  
TECHNOLOGY \* LABORATORY ASSISTANCE \*  
WOODWORKING TECHNOLOGY \*  
ADVERTISING \* MUSIC THEORY AND  
EDUCATION \* TEXTILE TECHNOLOGY \*  
COSMETIC RETAILING \* ENVIRONMENTAL  
MANAGEMENT \* GRAPHIC ARTS  
REPRODUCTION PRODUCTION AND CO-  
ORDINATION \* FOREST RECREATION  
TECHNOLOGY \* LEGAL ASSISTANCE \* CHILD  
AND YOUTH WORK \* FITNESS AND LEISURE  
MANAGEMENT \* SOFTWARE DESIGN \*  
WATER QUALITY TECHNOLOGY \* SPORTS  
ADMINISTRATION \* LANDSCAPE  
TECHNOLOGY \* VETERINARY MEDICINE \*  
WELDING \* COMPUTER ANALYSIS \*  
COSMETIC TECHNIQUES AND MANAGEMENT \*  
BROADCAST ENGINEERING \* NUTRITION \*  
MINING \* TRAVEL AGENCY \* SOCIOLOGY \*  
FOOD AND BEVERAGE MANAGEMENT \*  
CHIROPRACTICS \* FARMING \* KINESIOLOGY  
\* MARKETING \* LANDSCAPING PROPERTY  
APPRAISAL\* ULTRASOUND TECHNOLOGY \*  
CARTOGRAPHY \* PSYCHOLOGY \* TEXTILE  
DESIGN \* SURGERY \* ELECTRONICS \*  
HOTEL AND RESTAURANT MANAGEMENT \*  
FIRE PROTECTION AND SAFETY  
TECHNOLOGY \* MARINE TECHNOLOGY

# You MAKE the Choice!

## Introduction

This booklet introduces you to ten interesting women who live and work right here in the Yukon. Their career choices are ones you may not have thought of for yourself after you finish school, because these jobs have traditionally been done by men.

It wasn't many years ago that most doctors, accountants, lawyers, police officers, and carpenters were men. Things are changing. More and more women are entering the work force; many of them are in professions and trades. Many occupations that were dominated by men are beginning to have better representation of women. The ten occupations highlighted in this booklet are just a few of the hundreds of trades and professions that are options for you to consider for your future work.

As Doris Penner, one of the women profiled in the booklet says, "If anyone says you can't do a certain job because you're a woman, don't argue. Just do it!"

## Barbara Anderson

### Architect

*Should maths and sciences be compulsory through Grade XII? What courses do you think you will need if you want to go to university?*

Barbara Anderson thinks one of the best things about being an architect is that it lets her be an artist and a scientist at the same time. “It's a good balance between being technical and creative.” Not only does she design buildings from scratch, but she oversees the construction of the building from beginning to end. She also designs renovations for existing buildings.

Barbara likes the independence of being self-employed, of being “her own boss.” She enjoys the wide variety of projects and likes the creativity of her work. Architects also earn good wages.

But it's not all design work! Barbara's success depends on getting clients, so that means her communication skills are important too. Barbara enjoys people. “It's exciting to work with people and to design a building that fulfils their requirements and realizes their dreams.”

As a high school student, Barbara found it helpful to take both arts and science courses, but an even better experience was getting a summer job in an architect's office during the summers. “The first summer I was a gopher—running things around town. The next summer, they put me on the drafting boards!” Her summer experiences helped Barbara decide that becoming an architect was the job for her.

It takes a university degree to become an architect and then you work as an intern at first. Barbara worked in a small office after graduation. She quickly became confident in her abilities and felt ready to run her own business. As an architect, Barbara says, “The work is challenging ... but the best part is when you walk through the door of the building that you created on paper!”



*Did you know that by dropping maths and sciences, girls eliminate at least half of their job opportunities for the future?*

*Wendy Royle*

## Veterinarian



A medical doctor can simply ask the patient, “What hurts?” A veterinarian asking an animal this question could wait a long time for an answer. For Wendy Royle, that is one of the biggest challenges of being a vet-trying to sleuth out the problem. “You really can be the hero sometimes,” she says.

Wendy says it is a myth that most vets can't work with people. She believes to be a good vet you must enjoy working with people, because they are the most important link to the animal you are treating.

“With a Doctorate in Veterinarian Medicine, you can work with almost any type of animal: wildlife, sled dogs, companion pets, even exotic species. You usually develop an interest in working with large or small animals. You might even travel with a circus or go along on the Yukon Quest.”

Being a vet has given Wendy many opportunities for travel and interesting job experiences. She worked in Chile a few years ago on a cattle ranch, and she is now a partner in a new veterinarian practice. If she wishes, later on she could teach, or do consulting work in the agricultural field. Other related fields are meat inspection, research and clinical pathology.

A good thing about being trained as a vet in Canada is that Canadian degrees are recognized and well regarded throughout the world. Wendy admits, “That's good for me because I'm a travel nut and it means I can work anywhere.”

Wendy thinks it's important to keep all the doors open for whatever you want to do. “Be fair to yourself, and do your best. Try different things, be open to new ideas, look for options. Don't worry about what other people think. Decide what seems right for you and go after it!”

*Do you think your  
choice of job could  
make a difference to  
the environment?*

*Sharon Benjamin*



## Conservation Officer

**H**ave you ever been out canoeing and spotted a moose standing silently at the water's edge or seen an eagle circling overhead? If you enjoy seeing wildlife and like being outdoors, maybe a Conservation Officer is the job for you. Sharon Benjamin is stationed in Dawson and she conducts her patrols by air, boat, truck, 4-wheeler and snowmobile. "To do this job, you must be able to drive all types of equipment."

Sharon can identify all big game, game birds, fur bearers and fish in the Yukon. She studies wildlife and collects information about their habitat, food, and the way they live. Sharon has a lot of contact with people too, talking to them about wildlife and about hunter safety.

Sharon wanted a job that would allow her to work outdoors and "travel by land, water, or air to observe wildlife." Being a Conservation Officer has also given her the opportunity of staying in her home community. "I wanted to work in the north and be stationed in northern communities."

Sharon views her work as having a natural connection to the heritage and lifestyle of her people. She explains, "I am from a small, native community where the people still practice their traditional way of life. The land and the management of our renewable resources is very important to our people."

"I feel committed to my job. I believe it is important to preserve the environment and wildlife. I want to protect it so that it will be available to future generations. "

*What subjects in school  
would be helpful in your  
career choice?*

*Cathie Stewart*



## Apprentice Electronic Communications Technician

**H**ave you ever wondered how your voice can travel from the Yukon to anywhere in the world when you make a long-distance telephone call? Cathie Stewart knows. She is an Apprentice Electronic Communications Technician with Northwestel.

“I work on microwave and satellite long-distance communications equipment which can carry as many as 1,800 to several thousand separate telephone conversations. Many of the people I meet through my job live and work in isolated locations where the telephone system is the only link with the “outside” world. I live in Whitehorse, but I travel by truck, helicopter or plane to Northwestel mountaintop radio sites in the Yukon, Northern B. C., or N. W. T.”

“There is a sense of accomplishment when you solve problems arising from an emergency. If we have a remote mining camp that has lost its communications, we have to pack any necessary test equipment and spares we think we'll need to the site - a real challenge when it's forty below and the snow is waist-deep. Once on site, we stay with the problem until we fix it. It feels great when you solve the problem!”

Cathie worked at a number of jobs before she returned to college to take a two-year Electronic Technician's course. She was hired by NorthWesTel and entered their four-year apprenticeship program. Once she earns her “ticketed” Journey Level certificate, Cathie will be a “certified” technician in her craft and can command a higher union wage.

The schooling is tough, but not impossible. “Grade XII maths and sciences, especially physics, are required,” says Cathie. “I've always enjoyed fixing things as a hobby and learning electronics basics means I can fix my own stereo, home appliances, and Television - the possibilities are endless!”

*Do you think that certain jobs  
are right for men and other jobs  
are right for women?*

*Kimberly Best*



## Stationary Engineer, 4th Class

To watch Kimberly Best at work is like seeing Alice in Wonderland after she drank the shrinking potion. In Kimberly's work as a 4th Class Power Engineer for the Yukon government, she works with massive boilers, valves, ducts and pipes. Kimberly is responsible for the care and operation of the power plant that generates steam for heat and electricity for air conditioning and humidity.

"My job is to ensure that the building remains a comfortable temperature, that the air quality is good, and that there is a safe environment for the employees." Kimberly stresses that in the workplace, safety comes first. "In my job, it is important to be able to work independently and to be able to solve problems as they arise."

Kimberly learned about this type of work from her father who is also a Power Engineer. It took Kimberly one year of training and a government exam to become a 4th Class Power Engineer. "The wages are good, and I like the work. It's a good feeling to know that you can take control of this massive machinery and make it behave itself. And if something does go wrong, you know what to do to fix it."

Another advantage of Kimberly's work is that she can choose to live almost anywhere in Canada and be quite confident that she can get a good job. "There are buildings everywhere and engineers are always needed to operate and maintain them."

"I don't do my job just because it's unique; I do it because I enjoy it. If you want to get into a job like this, do it because you are interested and you like it."



*Mary-Anne Isaak*

## Industrial Electrician

*What kinds of jobs do you think offer high salaries? What is the most important thing you think would help you get a “good job?” What would you call a “good job?”*



**B**eing an Industrial Electrician is like being a detective. Something goes wrong and you have to sleuth out the problem and solve the mystery; and, like Sherlock Holmes, you have the satisfaction of knowing you were the one who figured it out.

When the electricity goes out in the Dawson school, Mary-Anne Isaac is the person who is called upon to solve the mystery. She is the Industrial Electrician responsible for the entire Northern region, which includes Dawson City, Old Crow, Mayo and the Klondike and Ogilvie camps on the Dempster Highway.

Mary-Anne is responsible for making sure that all electrical and electronic systems, air handling units, sprinkler and fire alarm systems work in all of the government buildings. “All buildings have their own systems, and I maintain those systems. My job is mostly troubleshooting and repairing problems in buildings or machinery. I grease machines and bearings, fix motors and circuits. There is some outside work and I get to travel around the territory.”

Mary-Anne became an Industrial Electrician by chance. She started into university, and got a summer job working for an electrician. “I started out by putting in light fixtures and plugs. After summer was over, I still didn't have enough money to go back to university, so I asked if I could become an electrician's apprentice. I discovered that I was good at it, I liked the work, and when the time came for me to decide whether to go back to university, I chose trade school instead.

“I think this is a great trade for women. It's not heavy physical work. You use your head and you need good motor skills. If you like to work with your hands and enjoy solving mysteries, this is a good job for you.”

*Do you think you will face discrimination if you choose this type of career?*

*Charlotte Costley*



## Apprentice Motor Vehicle Mechanic

You're likely going to own a car someday. Charlotte Costley wasn't content to just own one, she wanted to know how it worked, and how to fix it when it didn't! "I was always fascinated by cars and I really wanted to work in the trade." In her job, she works mostly on cars - keeping them running and fixing things that go wrong. "This means that I deal with any problem that is mechanically-based, anything from general service to winterizing a vehicle. I seldom work on the body of the car."

"You don't have to be muscle bound to do this type of work. You need a bit of strength, but mostly, you need to have some creativity and ingenuity to think around situations and save yourself some strain."

A good way to get involved in mechanics is to try to work for a mechanic after school or in the summer. "The smaller the shop the better. Even if you just help out by doing chores, you will be getting used to the work environment. Even hanging out with people who work on vehicles helps."

"I believe that the auto mechanics field is a good place for women. Everybody owns a car and half the population are women. There is a stereotype that women don't know what is going on, but that's not true. Women just want to deal with someone who talks to them on their level without just rattling off a bunch of technical terms."

"I like the independence and security that my job gives me. It's a good feeling knowing that I can drive anywhere in the Yukon and if I have a problem, I can get myself out of it."

*Why do you think that women earn on average only \$.66 for every \$1.00 a man earns?*

*Dorine Fickes*

## Journey Level Painter

If you like wearing overalls and enjoy having a paint can in your hand, maybe you'd like to be a Journey Level Painter. When offices need to be painted, Dorine Fickes is the one in charge. It is Dorine who makes sure that the 330 government buildings and all the leased spaces throughout the territory stay fresh and attractive.

But Dorine doesn't just apply paint to walls and ceilings. She has to meet with people to decide what needs to be done, sand items to be painted, select and buy a variety of different types of paints, organize work schedules, supervise crews, repair damages, and prepare rooms. There is lots of variety in Dorine's job.

Although Dorine now works as a Journey Level Painter for the Yukon government, she used to operate her own company. If you are a Journey Level Painter, you have many options. You can paint houses or office buildings, or you may choose to paint steel towers or you may prefer to refinish furniture.

"If you are interested in becoming a Journey Level Painter, you could take woodworking in high school to learn about wood trim and cabinets, drafting and maths to learn how to read blueprints, and art to teach you about colors," Dorine says. In the summer, a lot of part-time and summer painting jobs are available.

Painting is a lucrative business, which means that the money is good and there's always work. Dorine says that it is important to do a good job so that people will like your work and tell others about you. "I had such a good reputation for cleaning up after myself that people would get their carpets cleaned before I painted!" I always try to back up my work with actions. I find that this is the best way to gain respect and keep my customers happy."



*Are your cultural roots important to you? Do you think there are jobs that would let you combine your culture and beliefs with your work?*

**Brenda Chambers**



## NEDAA Producer

When you watch your favorite show on T.V., do you ever wonder what goes into producing a television show? Brenda Chambers knows all about it. She is a Producer for NEDAA, Northern Native Broadcasting Yukon.

“As a producer, I have to pull all of the parts together: the reporters, camera operators, editors - the works- to produce one and a half hours of programming a week.” Television production involves finding and developing a good story to be video taped, scheduling cameras and crews for the shoots, and editing everything into a final production. Brenda is ultimately responsible for what goes on the air.

Brenda discovered this line of work, thanks to a pamphlet outlining an Audio-Visual Technician program, which she enrolled in. “I found this interesting, exciting and people-oriented. It was a practical course on how cameras and editing equipment work and included on-the job training.”

NEDAA works to produce T.V. programs that show native culture, and Brenda works to achieve that goal. She feels that her work is valuable to the community. “This is my home and I care about the work that I do. I feel that I'm making a difference, and that is a rewarding feeling. It is stressful at times, meeting deadlines, but it is exciting when you are working on something that will be important and useful in the future.”

“I do stories about things that interest me and I feel will be of interest to our audience. When I have an idea, I have never been scared to call someone up and say, 'This is what I want to do. Are you interested in seeing it on television?'”

# Doris Penner

## Aircraft Maintenance Engineer and Pilot

*How do you think you will cope with work and family responsibilities?*

No goal you set for yourself is too high - even the sky is not the limit. Doris Penner knows! She's a pilot. Being a pilot was something Doris Penner always wanted to be.

It wasn't until she was once stranded for eight hours because her plane had a loose wire, that she decided then and there that flying the aircraft was not enough, she would learn how to repair it as well.

So, four years after obtaining her pilots' license and ground school training, she enrolled in a training program for Aircraft Maintenance Engineering. The course lasts twelve months full time with classes in the mornings and practical work in the afternoons. After that, you do a one-year apprenticeship. "As an aircraft mechanic, you can expect to repair aircraft engines, wheels, wings, tin work, fabric work, electrical, structural and mechanical systems. You have to be responsible for your work because people's lives depend on it."

Since the Aircraft Maintenance Engineer training you receive in Canada is recognized worldwide, and the international language of flying happens to be English, this type of work could take you anywhere in the world. As Doris was interested in travelling, the choice of working outside Canada was something that appealed to her.

"You don't have to be mechanically-minded. When I first went to school, I didn't know the difference between a Robertson and Phillips screwdriver. And I got laughed at sometimes. But women make very good mechanics and pilots because we have good intuitive instincts. So if anyone says you can't do it because you're a woman, don't argue. Just go and do it."



## The End

If any of the occupations in the book have sparked your interest, there is something you should keep in mind as you enter high school. All of these jobs have one thing in common. They require maths. Not only these jobs, but the list goes on and on: the inside front and back covers of the book list more occupations that require maths, and in most cases, sciences.

Don't feel discouraged if you're not a whiz at maths or science. Most of the women in this book would tell you that they weren't either. But what they would say is, "Don't drop maths and sciences! Keep your options open. Keep trying, keep plugging away, and you can do it!"

If you would like more information about these occupations or other career choices, talk to your school counsellor.

NAVIGATION \* GEOLOGY \* FOOD AND DRUG \*  
TECHNOLOGY \* PATTERN MAKING \* MOULD  
MAKING \* AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL \* BUSINESS  
ADMINISTRATION \* GOURMET COOKING \* MARINE  
ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY \* FIRST NATIONS  
BANDS MANAGEMENT \* FASHION DESIGN \* PUBLIC  
HEALTH INSPECTION \* TRAVEL AND TOURISM  
ADMINISTRATION \* X-RAY TECHNOLOGY \* DATA  
PROCESSING \* LABORATORY TECHNOLOGY \*  
FURNITURE PRODUCTION AND DESIGN \* INTERIOR  
DESIGN \* PHYSICS \* SYSTEMS DESIGN \*  
ENGINEERING \* MUSIC COMPOSITION \*  
RECYCLING \* SPORTS \* PSYCHOLOGY \*  
AEROSPACE ENGINEERING \* CAD-CAM  
TECHNOLOGY \* INDUSTRIAL MACHINERY \*  
MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY \* PIANO TECHNOLOGY \*  
MUSICOLOGY \* TECHNICAL WRITING \* QUALITY  
ASSURANCE TECHNOLOGY \* AIRPORT  
MANAGEMENT \* BIOCHEMISTRY \* FASHION  
MANAGEMENT \* CLERICAL DUTIES \* HEATING AND  
VENTILATING DESIGN TECHNOLOGY \* NURSING \*  
PETROLEUM AND MINERAL ENGINEERING \*  
SURVEY ENGINEERING \* REAL ESTATE SALES \*  
AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE TECHNOLOGY \* HEALTH  
RECORD ADMINISTRATION \* ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION \* RESPIRATORY THERAPY \* TEACHING  
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PHYSIOLOGY \* CLOTHING  
MANUFACTURING MANAGEMENT \* GERONTOLOGY  
PEST MANAGEMENT \* NURSING ASSISTANCE \*  
AMBULANCE AND EMERGENCY CARE WORK \*  
ENTERTAINMENT MANAGEMENT \* COMPUTER  
SCIENCE \* HORTICULTURE \* INSURANCE \* UNDERWRITING  
\* OCEANOGRAPHY \* PHOTOGRAPHY \* TERRAIN  
AND WATER RESOURCE TECHNOLOGY \* DRAFTING  
TECHNOLOGY \* AUTO MECHANIC \* DENTAL  
ASSISTANCE \* ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH  
TECHNOLOGY \* GEOGRAPHY \* ANTHROPOLOGY \*  
FASHION MERCHANDISING \* DENTISTRY \*  
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY TECHNOLOGY  
\* STATISTICS \* RETAIL MANAGEMENT \*  
ARCHITECTURE \* ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING \*  
OPHTHALMIC DISPENSATION \* PHYSICAL  
EDUCATION INSTRUCTION \* ASTRONOMY \* SKI  
RESORT OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT \* SPEECH  
THERAPY \* AVIATION TECHNOLOGY



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