COLLABORATIVE WRITING OF TEXTBOOKS

By Sally Wendkos Olds TAA #470

Sally Wendkos Olds is a professional writer, having written more than 200 magazine articles. They have been published in such magazines as Ladies' Home Journal, Parents and Today's Health. In addition to the three books mentioned in this article, coauthored with Dr. Papalia, she has authored or coauthored six other books. She is a former president of the American Society of Journalists and Authors.

The 27th floor of the McGraw-Hill building may not exactly be Heaven, but it's where my longest-lasting professional marriage was made. In 1973 I received a phone call from Rob Fry, a McGraw-Hill editor who wanted to talk to me about a new project, in which the firm would team up academic authors with professional writers who were used to writing for lay readers. The first book in the series would be an introductory college text about child development.

Rob had seen an article of mine in *The New York Times Magazine* about sex-role stereotyping in children; then he looked my name up in the directory of what was then the Society of Magazine Writers (now the American Society of Journalists and Authors). There he saw that I had written two books, in addition to articles, about child care and family life. We met, he saw my books and tearsheets of my articles, and he called back to offer me the opportunity to work with a professor in Madison, Wisconsin.

I had never thought about textbook writing, but I decided to go ahead-and that decision was the smartest professional one l ever made. I went on to coauthor 12 editions of 3 textbooks with the same professor, Diane E. Papalia, Ph.D. It was a good personal decision, since l've grown and learned from working with Diane, and I also gained a good friend. And it was a good writing decision. My textbook and trade writing have fed one another, as I've drawn on research that I came across while working on the textbooks for both magazine

articles and trade books, and vice versa.

From this experience and also my experience in coauthoring trade books with a physician and an educator, I would make the following suggestions to academic authors who want to collaborate with a professional writer:

Finding Coauthors

To find a coauthor,

- Look for someone who has some knowledge of your field, may-be someone who has interviewed you or whose work you have read.
- Go through a writers' organization. The American Society of Journalists and Authors maintains a service called Dial-a-Writer, a referral service for finding professional writers. Dial-a-Writer can be reached by phone at 212-398-1934. All negotiation is done directly between clients and writers. The ASJA also publishes a directory of its more than 750 members (all published writers who have had to meet exacting standards of eligibility), giving subject specialties, geographical areas, names and addresses and other information. The directory is available for \$50. The ASJA's phone number is 212-997-0947, and the address is 1501 Broadway, Suite 302, New York, NY 10036.

Choosing A Coauthor

A Coauthor should be chosen carefully.

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SOFTWARE PUBLISHERS SUE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

Copying of Computer Programs Alleged

May be Settled Out of Court

The University of Oregon's continuing education center is charged with copying computer programs illegally in a suit filed in U. S. District Court in Portland. The suit was brought by six software publishers, all of whom are members of the Software Publishers Association. The allegation claims that programs were copied illegally on as many as 60 computers and that the user manuals were also copied.

The plaintiffs are Aldus, Ashton-Tate, Claris, Lotus Development, Microsoft and WordPerfect Corporation. Since 1988 the Software Publishers Association has filed some seventy suits for software copyright infringement on behalf of its members. This is the first action brought against a state or state institution since the passage of the Copyright Remedy Clarification Act in 1990 (TAA Report, January 1991.) Prior to the enactment of that law the 11th amendment of the U. S. constitution barred lawsuits against states.

According to *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (May 29) the lawsuit against the University of Oregon has a good chance of being settled out of court.

For the Glossary

EI-Hi Publishing: Publishing at the elementary school or high-school level

Technogeek: One who is steeped in some educational technology and spends incredible amounts of time working with it.