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Lucinda Jackson, pictured here circa 1971, details the myriad instances of harassment and misogyny she faced in her career in a new book, *Just a Girl: Growing up Female and Ambitious*.

PHOTO COURTESY OF LUCINDA JACKSON

BY **RACHEL LEIBROCK** / [rachell@newsreview.com](mailto:rachell@newsreview.com)

## A future focus

A new feminist book tackles harassment, misogyny and change

Lucinda Jackson was only 9 the first time a man harassed her, but it would be years before she knew what to call it.

She was with her sister and friends at the mall, excited to browse the make-up counter even though she wasn't allowed to wear any. She remembers seeing a stranger nearby, an older man, someone "dad-like." Harmless, she thought.

Then, she drifted away from her companions. That's when the man approached and exposed himself to her.

It was frightening—Jackson recalls rushing back to her group—and also confusing.

"I was probably 30 before I realized that was what had happened," Jackson says now.

Jackson explores sexual harassment in its many iterations in the just-published *Just a Girl: Growing up Female and Ambitious* (\$16.95, She Writes Press), examining the topic largely through her experiences as a kid in the 1950s and, later, as an adult working in the male-dominated science field.

Jackson, a former Sacramentan who now lives in the Bay Area, will tackle the subject with SN&R advice columnist Joey Garcia, Sunday, Nov. 10 at the Cotton Club.

Jackson's resume is a road map of her journey. With a bachelor's degree in botany and plant biology

and a master's and Ph.D., in plant physiology and environmental biology, she has spent her decades-long career working on health, safety and environmental issues at companies such as the RAND Corp. and Chevron.

If her parents had their way, however, she would have been a housewife. Her father didn't think she needed college, and her mother, who studied home economics in college, mostly deferred to his wishes.

In the book, she remembers the time a friend of her father's suggested she should become a "kept woman."

"My father agreed," Jackson writes. "This was the only piece of career advice I received from him."

But Jackson persisted. She remembers a pivotal moment that helped her move forward academically and professionally. She was in her 30s and had just completed her doctorate. She was married with a baby, but even though she and her husband both worked, she shouldered most of the parenting duties.

That's when Jackson finally put a name on all that harassment she'd faced.

"[Finishing school] gave me some crazy confidence," she says now. "Everything came to a head and I had a blowout."

That blowout led to a divorce and a sense of starting over. It was an extreme move, one she hopes her book can help others avoid. *Just a Girl* isn't just about Jackson's story, it's also a call to action that starts with how we raise not just girls, but boys.

Jackson, who has three adult sons, outlines the need for what she calls a Boys and Men Liberation movement.

"One of my hopes is that women, who are unfortunately still the main child raisers, will concentrate on raising fuller human beings who are not programmed to be aggressors," she says.

Garcia says Jackson's perspective is important.

"My generation of women was raised to call it out," Garcia says. "Her generation wasn't but she learned to do so and it made her stronger."

Jackson's frankness makes *Just a Girl* a critical read, she adds.

"Despite her education and degrees, no one taught her how to navigate interpersonal challenges or harassment," Garcia says. "She also tells the truth about how she was complicit in situations that disturbed her while also pointing out the damaging role that others played."

While these stories are important to share, Jackson says, she wants to focus on the future by giving boys and young men more gender-neutral guidance and choices.

"If we did that, we could change the world in one generation," she says. □

Catch Lucinda Jackson and Joey Garcia in conversation, 4 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 10 at the Cotton Club, 2331 J St.