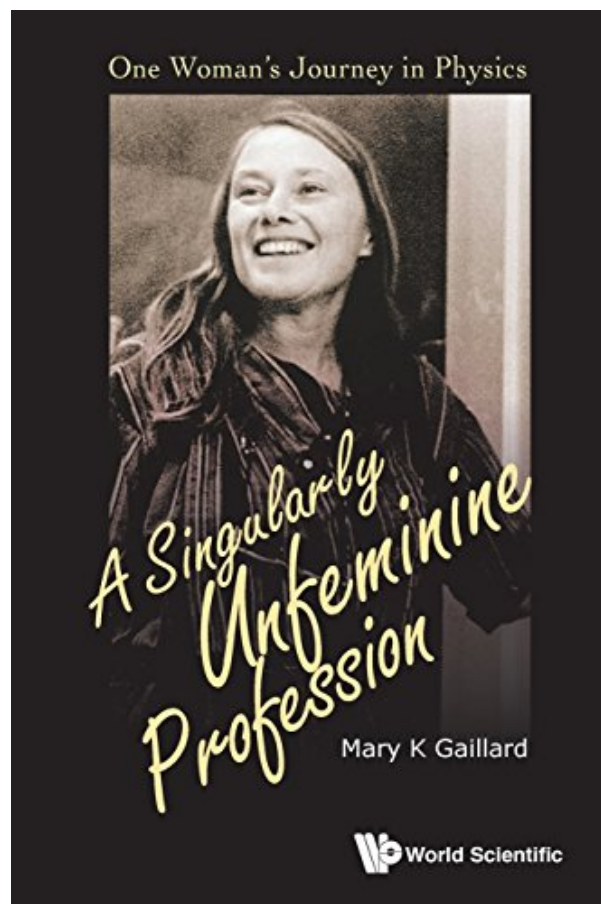
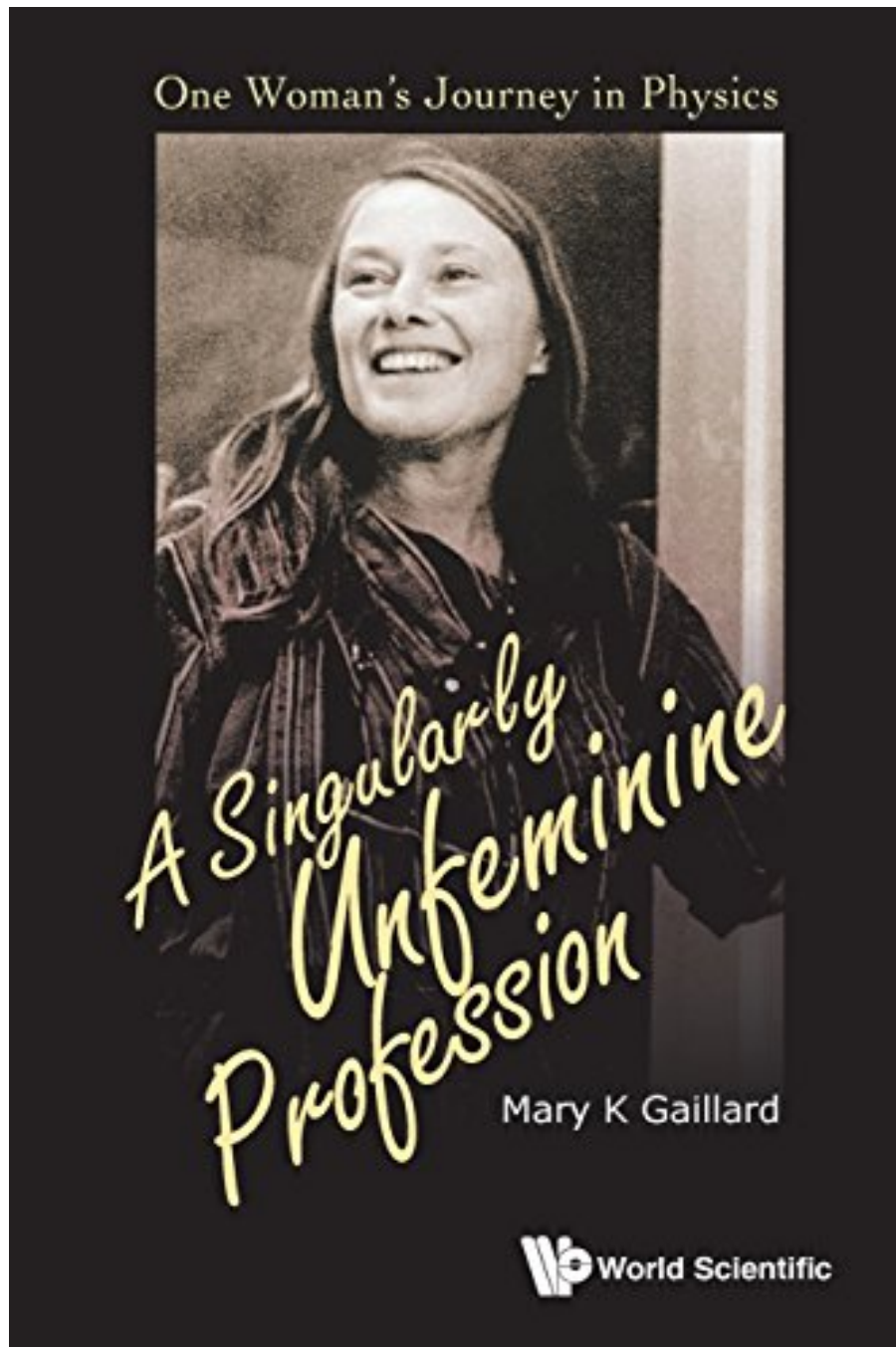


A SINGULARLY UNFEMININE PROFESSION: ONE WOMAN'S JOURNEY IN PHYSICS BY MARY K GAILLARD



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From the Inside Flap

In 1981 Mary K Gaillard became the first woman on the physics faculty at the University of California at Berkeley. Her career as a theoretical physicist spanned the period from the inception in the late 1960s and early 1970s of what is now known as the Standard Model of particle physics and its experimental confirmation, culminating with the discovery of the Higgs particle in 2012. *A Singularly Unfeminine Profession* recounts Gaillard's experiences as a woman in a very male-dominated field, while tracing the development of the Standard Model as she witnessed it and participated in it. The generally nurturing environment of her childhood and college years, as well as experiences as an undergraduate in particle physics laboratories and as a graduate student at Columbia University which cemented her passion for particle physics left her unprepared for the difficulties that she confronted as a second year graduate student in Paris, and later at CERN, another particle physics laboratory near Geneva, Switzerland. The development of the Standard Model, as well as attempts to go beyond it and aspects of early universe physics, are described through the lens of Gaillard's own work, in a language written for a lay audience.

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10 of 11 people found the following review helpful.

Bemused

By Herbert Gintis

I do not know why Gaillard wrote this book, and I do not know why I read it (with pleasure). I guess the author wanted to stress the difficulties of breaking into an all-male enclave. I guess I wanted to learn something about the emergence of the Standard Model. I liked the book, although I may be biased by the fact that I am an academic, and the book is an odyssey of academic schmoozing.

I certainly did not have to be told about the male domination of academia forty years ago. In all my years as an undergrad at the University of Pennsylvania and the Sorbonne, and my graduate training in economics at Harvard, I never had a female instructor. The only books I read by women were in economic history and development economics. When I was a first-year Assistant Professor at Harvard, I received a letter inviting my wife to join the Harvard Wives Club. Needless to say, there was no Harvard Husbands club.

Gaillard (which means "hardy" in French) spends lots of time on her personal life, which is okay with me. She also talks a lot about faculty politics and how she was mistreated. Okay. But I don't know an academic who couldn't relate with relish stories of being mistreated. Really boring. Who cares?

I recommend this book because it found it fun reading, I did learn some history of science, and Gaillard is a pleasant writer with a sunny disposition.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

A Dose of Modern Physics and Persistence

By D. Veenendaal

Some modern atomic physics knowledge is helpful. I found the history of standard model physics presented at about the right physics level for me, a former high physics and chemistry teacher. The thread of chauvinism Gaillard presents throughout the book is enlightening, but also disturbing.

4 of 8 people found the following review helpful.

Great read!!!

By Fizyka Pomaga

Fascinating - good information and reads fantastic!

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