



# Breaking Into the Current: Boatwomen of the Grand Canyon

*Louise Teal*

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**In 1973, Marilyn Sayre gave up her job as a computer programmer** and became the first woman in twenty years to run a commercial boat through the Grand Canyon. Georgie White had been the first, back in the 1950s, but it took time before other women broke into guiding passengers down the Colorado River. This book profiles eleven of the first full-season Grand Canyon boatwomen, weaving together their various experiences in their own words. *Breaking Into the Current* is a story of romance between women and a place. Each woman tells a part of every Canyon boatwoman's story: when Marilyn Sayre talks about leaving the Canyon, when Ellen Tibbets speaks of crew camaraderie, or when Martha Clark recalls the thrill of white water, each tells how all were involved in the same romance. All the boatwomen have stories to tell of how they first came to the Canyon and why they stayed. Some speak of how they balanced their passion for being in the Canyon against the frustration of working in a traditionally male-oriented occupation, where today women account for about fifteen percent of the Canyon's commercial river guides. As river guides in love with the Canyon and their work, these women have followed their hearts. "I've done a lot," says Becca Lawton, "but there's been nothing like holding those oars in my hands and putting my boat exactly where I wanted it. Nothing."

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