



## College-Educated Women More Likely to Stay Married

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A woman with a college education may be less likely to tie the knot than her less-educated counterparts, but once she's married this college grad is more likely to stay that way, according to two economists. ADVERTISEMENT

The finding, based on a review of research from 1950 to 2008, also reveals changes over time in who is getting married and having kids and why. Historically, women with more education have been the least likely to marry and have children, but this marriage gap has eroded as marriage and remarriage rates for women with a college degree relative to those with less education have risen.

In fact, college-educated women now marry later, have fewer children, are less likely to view marriage as "financial security," are happier in their marriages and are the least likely to divorce.

Betsey Stevenson and Adam Isen, both of the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, prepared this review for the Council on Contemporary Families, a non-profit organization that provides information to the public on American families.

Here are some of the highlights:

- By age 40, college-educated white women are more likely to be married than other women, many of whom have already divorced.
- College-educated women who are unmarried at age 40 are twice as likely to marry in the next 10 years as unmarried 40-year-olds with just a high school degree.
- African-American women who have graduated from college or completed some college are more likely to marry than less-educated groups of black women.
- At age 40, 86 percent of college-educated white women have married, compared with 90 percent of women with some college, 88 percent of high school graduates, and 81 percent of high school dropouts.
- In 1950, only 74 percent of white college graduates had married by age 40, compared with 92 percent of women who had completed some college, 90 percent of high school graduates, and 93 percent of high-school dropouts.

### Times are Changing

The economists found that marriage rates rose for all women between 1950 and 1960, but leveled off for women without a college degree in the 1960s. Marriage rates of college-educated women continued to rise until 1980, closing much of the educational gap in marriage.

In the 1980s, marriage rates for all women began to fall, though college-educated women are the only group of women whose marriage rates in the 21st century are higher than they were at any point in the 1950s.

For the never-married, educated woman who hopes to marry, but wants to wait for "Mr. Right," you're in luck: The average age of first marriage has been rising, and so has the range of ages at which women marry for the first time.

In the past, a woman who was unmarried at age 35 or 40 was unlikely to ever marry. Today, 15 percent of all women who are unmarried at age 40 will marry in the next 10 years. That number increases to 20 percent for college-educated women.

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