

# NEWEST BOOK TOUCHY SUBJECT

## Extraordinary educator breaks new ground

By Katie Liesener



UNTIL THIS YEAR, most people could take one glance at Kim Marshall's bibliography and assume they had him pegged. It seems too easy: a grade school curriculum series, a kid-friendly book explaining evolution, a how-to book for teachers and dozens of articles on school desegregation, evaluation rubrics and the like.

His newest book might rattle their assumptions. *The Great Sex Secret: What Satisfied Women and Men Know That No One Talks About*.

"What?" was the first response of Bob Weintraub, Brookline High School principal, when asked if he had heard of Marshall's book. Second response: "The Great...?" Third: "What was the third word?" Finally: "I'm sorry... [uncomprehending silence]...sex???"

It wasn't the cell reception. Kim Marshall is a well-known school curriculum and policy expert and former principal, for whom Weintraub and others have a "tremendous respect." And most people who have made a career in education would be loath to touch the subject of sex, an understandably touchy one in a profession that deals with children.

But Marshall, who has worked eight years on the book, is used to tackling subjects others shy away from. After more than 30 years as a sex educator, he has developed a certain comfort level discussing sex. "You don't blush. You're very matter of fact. No question throws you," he explained. "You also face the challenge: How do you explain something that is confusing or embarrassing that people don't like to talk about?"

In the case of his latest book, that mute subject is how sex can be—and usually isn't—as enjoyable for women as for men. Okay. But why Marshall? To understand why he felt so moved to stick his neck out for couples' sexual satisfaction is to know the history behind all those other writings. It's a history of being guided by a nearly naïve belief that he could teach in areas where others did not, or dared not, tread.

In the beginning, that optimism had all the makings of an instantaneous deflation. The newly graduated Kim Marshall walked into his first classroom in 1969 with a lot of social liberalism and not much of a clue. In truth, when he was pursuing his government degree at Harvard, he'd had zero intention of going into education. The son of a CIA agent, he had studied government, not education, at Harvard and had big plans to go into international

'It's not surprising that every new generation tends to go back to the same situation: one-sided sex.'

