

Basic Detail Report

Title Interview with Rhoda Loeb

Date 2004 February 25

Primary Maker Rhoda Loeb

Description Oral history interview with Rhoda Loeb who was interviewed by

Marjorie Wilder on February 25, 2004 for the Connecticut Bar Foundation's

History of Connecticut Women in the Legal Profession Project. Topics Discussed:

- Early Life: Rhoda Leshine Loeb was born in Branford, Connecticut on March 30, 1921. Her grandmother immigrated from Russia in 1902 with five children, opening a market in New Haven, and later a news store in Branford in 1910. Her father later started the Branford Review newspaper. - Education: She graduated from East Haven High School and attended the University of Michigan, initially intending to pursue journalism. - Law School: She went directly to Yale Law School, a decision influenced by her father. She graduated in 1944. At Yale, there were about six or seven women in her class. She studied labor law. - Early Legal Career: After graduating, she sought employment on Wall Street. She joined Spence, Hodgekiss, Parker and Durier, practicing labor law. - Antisemitism and Assault: She encountered antisemitism at one firm. She also experienced sexual harassment from a junior partner and was supported by Soya Menchakoff, who later became dean of the University of Chicago Law School and taught at Harvard Law School. - Gender Discrimination: At 23 years old, she worked at Appellate Court in New York City where she was initially not recognized as an attorney due to being a woman. She spent just over four years at the firm. She

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took both the Connecticut and New York Bar exams. She faced gender

discrimination in social settings, with male-only clubs and dining rooms. -

Private Practice: Upon returning to Branford, she set up her own practice in a

shared office space. She became Branford's sewer counsel and town counsel,

and served as a part-time town judge before the Unified Court System. Her

practice continued until 1965. Personal circumstances, including an obstetrical

problem and the death of a daughter, led her to work from home with family

support. - Expanded Practice: In the early 1960s, she moved her practice to New

Haven, opening an office on Bradley Street. She specialized in family law and

volunteered as a public defender in juvenile court, particularly for incest cases.

She joined the firm Evans and Evans, which later became Evans Feldman and

Boyer. - Compensation Commissioner Appointment: In 1979, she was appointed

the first woman Compensation Commissioner by Governor Ella Grasso.

Dimensions Duration: 1 Hour, 42 Minutes, 51 Seconds