

Basic Detail Report

Title Interview with Susan R. Meredith

Date 2007 October 24

Primary Maker Susan R. Meredith

Description Oral history interview with Susan R. Meredith who was interviewed

by Alice A. Bruno on October 24, 2007 for the Connecticut Bar Foundation's

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

- Early Life: Susan Meredith was born on August 10, 1944, in Troy, New York, and grew up in Sheffield, Alabama, after her father returned from World War II. -

College: In 1962, she attended Vanderbilt University in Nashville, majoring in

Political Science. - Civil Rights Movement : She noted Vanderbilt's sexism at the

time. She became involved in civil rights issues and, despite the Brown v. Board

of Education Supreme Court decision, did not attend school with black people

until she was a junior in college. - Parental Influence: Susan Meredith's parents

held liberal views [sic]. Her father being pro-choice and a First Amendment

advocate, and her mother described as a feminist. - Marriage: Susan married

John Watson, whom she met at Vanderbilt, and they have two children. -

Women's Movement: Susan and her husband moved to Boston in 1967. She

became involved in the anti-war movement and the women's movement. In

1970, she joined a consciousness-raising group called Bread and Roses, where

she decided to go to law school. - Early Legal and Discrimination Work: At the

same time, she became involved in a sex discrimination complaint at her

workplace, the Boston Redevelopment Authority, where women planners were

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paid significantly less than men. She and two others received a grant from the

John Hay Whitney Foundation to study women's employment by the City of

Boston. - Law School: Susan Meredith started at Northeastern Law School,

which had a high percentage of women, in the fall of 1971. - Founding and Work

at CWEALF: The Connecticut Women's Educational and Legal Fund (CWEALF)

was formed around 1973 by a group of Connecticut lawyers who initially worked

on a bill against credit discrimination. Susan started working at CWEALF in 1974,

and became the executive and legal director at the end of 1976. CWEALF initially

had offices in New Haven (1974) and opened a Hartford office around 1977.

During her time, CWEALF filed test cases, including an employment

discrimination case against Electric Boat in Groton. - Post-CWEALF Career: After

leaving CWEALF in 1980, Susan became a private labor arbitrator. She then

became a full member of the state Board of Labor Relations. - The Evolving Legal

Profession and Women in Law : Susan Meredith reflected on the significant

increase in women in the legal profession, noting that the bar is now more than

50% women.

Dimensions Duration: 1 Hour, 30 Minutes, 3 Seconds