

# Basic Detail Report

## **Title Interview with Kathryn Emmett**

Date 2016 November 3

Primary Maker Kathryn Emmett

Description Oral history interview with Kathryn Emmett who was interviewed by

Emily Golub and Beth Golub on November 3, 2016 for the Connecticut Bar

Foundation's History of Connecticut Women in the Legal Profession Project. -

Topics Discussed: - Family Life & Blacklisting: Kathryn Emmett discusses her

family's background in theater. Her mother, Kim Hunter, an actress, and her

father, Robert Emmett, an actor and dancer, were involved in the theater. Her

mother was blacklisted, which led her father to become a writer for the theater. -

Early Decision to Become a Lawyer : Kathryn decided to go to law school around

her early years of college. She was engaged in social issues as a child and

concerned about the civil rights movement, which motivated her interest in law.

- Early Life: She grew up in New York City, Greenwich Village. In high school at

Friends Seminary, she became uncomfortable with the lack of Black students

and worked to change it. As a teenager, she worked as an usher at the Cherry

Lane Theatre and was involved in political work, including chairing High School

Students for Kennedy in New York during the Kennedy campaign. - College

Experience: She attended Radcliffe College earning a Harvard degree. She

initially majored in Architecture but switched to history and then to Social

Relations. While in college, she participated in theater and the Harvard Review

magazine. - Gender Discrimination: Women at Radcliffe faced restrictions on

# Basic Detail Report

behavior and dress. There were no sports teams for women. - Law School:

Kathryn entered Yale Law School in 1966. In her class of about 170 students, there were only approximately seven women. The private Yale club, Mory's, where law firms interviewed, did not admit women, creating a discriminatory environment. She dropped out after a year and a half because she couldn't see a suitable career path in large firms. She then worked for Katie Roraback, a lawyer in New Haven who represented social activists and was involved in the Griswold case. This experience motivated her to return to law school after half a year. She graduated in 1970. - Early Legal Career: After law school, Kathryn worked for Koskoff, Koskoff, Rutkin, and Bieder in Bridgeport. She worked on the appeal of Lonnie McLucas, who was convicted in the Black Panthers trial. She also became involved in two formative cases: challenging Mory's exclusion of women and challenging Connecticut's anti-abortion statutes. She argued most of the legal arguments and was involved in developing the legal theories, including the trimester formulation adopted by the U.S. Supreme Court in Roe v. Wade. - Establishing Her Own Practice : Kathryn left the Koskoff office in 1976 and opened her own practice in Stamford. She continued to do various types of trial work, primarily special public defender work, civil rights cases, medical malpractice, and employment discrimination cases.

Dimensions Duration: 8 Minutes, 42 Seconds