

# Basic Detail Report

## **Title Interview with Judge Frederica S. Brenneman**

Date 2000 September 26

Primary Maker Frederica S. Brenneman

Description Oral history interview with Judge Frederica S. Brenneman who was interviewed by Judge A. Susan Peck on September 26, 2000 for the Connecticut Bar Foundation's History of Connecticut Women in the Legal Profession Project.

Topics Discussed: - Early Life and Family Background: Frederica discusses her parents. Her father was a newspaperman from Louisville, Kentucky, and her mother was a writer from Detroit. - Great Depression: She grew up in Ann Arbor during the Depression, which emphasized education over material things. - Radcliffe College: She started Radcliffe College in July 1943 at the age of 16, attending year-round due to World War II. She majored in economics. She graduated early in February 1947. Her college experience included classes with men from Harvard's Naval ROTC, and she participated in the founding of Radio Radcliffe. - Post-College Career: After graduating from Radcliffe, she worked for a year at the newly formed International Monetary Fund in Washington D.C., starting after February 1947. Around February 1948, she moved to New York and worked in public relations for the Bureau of Labor Statistics until October 1950. - Harvard Law School Admission and Experience: In 1950, Harvard Law School admitted its first class of women, and Frederica was one of 13 women in a class of about 550 men. - Marriage: She married Russell Brenneman in the summer between her first and second year of law school. - Move to Connecticut and Early

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Legal Career: After her husband, Russell, left the Army in 1956, they moved to

Torrington, Connecticut, seeking a different way of life. They both passed the

Connecticut bar exam in 1956. She initially stayed home, raising children, and

did limited legal work like searching titles for her husband's firm. - Motherhood:

Her first child was born in 1960, the second in 1961, and her daughter was born

in 1964 after they moved to Essex. - Juvenile Judge and Juvenile Justice: She

was appointed to the Connecticut Bench as a juvenile judge in 1967. She

discusses the challenges and rewards of juvenile justice, emphasizing her

interest in human lives over money. - In 1978, she co-founded Children-in-

Placement Program in Connecticut. - "Judging Amy": Her daughter, Amy

Brenneman, co-created and starred in the CBS drama "Judging Amy," which was

inspired by Frederica's experiences as a judge. Amy discussed this at a Harvard

Law School reunion in 1998.

Dimensions Duration: 1 Hour, 39 Minutes, 35 Seconds