

Basic Detail Report

Title Interview with Susan Wolfson

Date 2004 December 17

Description Oral history interview with Susan Wolfson who was interviewed by

Patricia R. Kaplan on December 17, 2004 for the Connecticut Bar Foundation's

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

- Personal Background: Susan Wolfson was born on May 2, 1938, in Brooklyn, New York. Her father was a civil engineer who graduated from Cornell in 1927, and her mother worked as a legal stenographer and interpreter. - Influence: Her mother's experiences with an incident involving workplace harassment in the 1920s and 1930s at the U.S. District Attorney's Office, influenced Wolfson's interest in law and gender equity. - College Years: Susan Wolfson graduated from Barnard College in 1959, where she studied economics and was the managing editor of the Barnard Bulletin. - Early Career and Family Life: After graduating, she worked in economic research for Union Carbide, Celanese Corporation, and Sperry Hutchinson in New York. She stopped working when she moved to Boston with her husband. She later worked part-time at Harbridge House, a management consulting firm, in Boston. She had her second child in Boston. The family then moved to Texas for two years while her husband was in the Air Force, during which time she was not employed. They moved to New Haven, where her husband worked at Yale Medical School. - Law School: At age 35, in 1974, she decided to go to law school after her cousin Nick Wolfson, then a professor at UConn Law School, suggested it. She enrolled at UConn in the fall of

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1973. - Family and Community Support for Law School: Her parents and husband were very supportive. However, the community was less supportive, with a school principal telling her that going to law school would "ruin" her son's life. UConn was accommodating by giving her an early class schedule to allow her to be home in the afternoons. - Law School Experience: She graduated in 1976 from the first UConn law class with a significant number of women. - Work During Law School and Bar Exam: She worked for Dick Jacobs and Sachs, Sachs, Delaney and Sachs in New Haven during her summers. In her third year, she worked for Senator Joe Lieberman, then the Senate Majority Leader of the Connecticut Senate, through a legislative clinic. She took and passed the bar exam in New Haven at Southern Connecticut. - Post-Graduation Opportunities and Discrimination: Opportunities were limited after graduation. She faced offensive questions during interviews. One firm suggested she would not care about partnership because her husband was a doctor. She ultimately worked for Senator Lieberman's law firm due to her previous work with him. - Work at Lieberman's Firm and Mentorship: At the firm, she handled various types of work, including collection, real estate, and some family law. She was initially the only woman in the firm.

Dimensions Duration: 48 Minutes, 14 Seconds