Basic Detail Report

Title Interview with Judge Barbara A. Coppeto

Date 2005 April 18

Primary Maker Barbara A. Coppeto

Description Oral history interview with Judge Barbara A. Coppeto who was interviewed by Judge Elaine Gordon on April 18, 2005 for the Connecticut Bar Foundation's History of Connecticut Women in the Legal Profession Project. Topics Discussed: - Early Life : Judge Coppeto was born in Waterbury, Connecticut, on September 26, 1933, and describes her childhood in a middle-class neighborhood of Waterbury. - Family Background and Early Exposure to Law : Barbara Coppeto's father was a practicing criminal lawyer in Waterbury who often mentored new lawyers. Her mother was a stay-at-home parent. Barbara spent considerable time at her father's office, which sparked her early interest in law. During high school, she also worked for a couple of summers answering phones and checking mail for other lawyers in her father's building. - High School: She attended an all-girls Catholic high school in Waterbury. - Summer Jobs: Coppeto recalled a brief job at Scoville Manufacturing making zipper tops, which ended due to a strike. Another summer, her father enrolled her in a post-junior college program to learn typing and shorthand. - College: In 1951, she chose to attend Trinity College in Washington D.C. She majored in political science and history. While in Washington, she joined the Connecticut Club and enjoyed attending arguments, debates, and hearings on Capitol Hill. - Transition to Law School: After college, she took the Civil Service Exam and later

applied to law school. She attended the University of Virginia, influenced by her father's positive recollections of his time there. - Law School Experience : She was one of the few women in her law school class. She participated in activities like Moot Court and wrote for the Law Weekly, the law school newspaper. - Early Career: After passing the bar exams in Virginia and Connecticut, she began her legal career in Derby, Connecticut, around 1958. Her practice evolved to include various types of cases such as trusts and estates, wills, personal injury, domestic divorce cases, and criminal work in local courts. - Partnership: She joined Harold Yudkin's law practice in Derby. Yudkin was a mentor to her and had an active practice. He was also involved in real estate development, building over a thousand homes in the area. - Experiences as a Woman in Law : She often found herself as the only woman at the bar in New Haven and other places, which garnered attention but generally positive reception.

Dimensions Duration: 1 Hour, 15 Minutes