

# Basic Detail Report

## Title Interview with Rhoda Loeb

Date 2004 February 25

Description Oral history interview with Rhoda Loeb who was interviewed by

Marjorie Wilder on February 25, 2004 for the Connecticut Bar Foundation's

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

- Early Life: Rhoda Leshine Loeb was born in Branford, Connecticut on March 30,

1921. Her grandmother immigrated from Russia in 1902 with five children,

opening a market in New Haven, and later a news store in Branford in 1910. Her

father later started the Branford Review newspaper. - Education: She graduated

from East Haven High School and attended the University of Michigan, initially

intending to pursue journalism. - Law School: She went directly to Yale Law

School, a decision influenced by her father. She graduated in 1944. At Yale, there

were about six or seven women in her class. She studied labor law. - Early Legal

Career: After graduating, she sought employment on Wall Street. She joined

Spence, Hodgekiss, Parker and Durier, practicing labor law. - Antisemitism and

Assault: She encountered antisemitism at one firm. She also experienced sexual

harassment from a junior partner and was supported by Soya Menchakoff, who

later became dean of the University of Chicago Law School and taught at

Harvard Law School. - Gender Discrimination: At 23 years old, she worked at

Appellate Court in New York City where she was initially not recognized as an

attorney due to being a woman. She spent just over four years at the firm. She

took both the Connecticut and New York Bar exams. She faced gender

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discrimination in social settings, with male-only clubs and dining rooms. -

Private Practice: Upon returning to Branford, she set up her own practice in a shared office space. She became Branford's sewer counsel and town counsel, and served as a part-time town judge before the Unified Court System. Her practice continued until 1965. Personal circumstances, including an obstetrical problem and the death of a daughter, led her to work from home with family support. - Expanded Practice: In the early 1960s, she moved her practice to New Haven, opening an office on Bradley Street. She specialized in family law and volunteered as a public defender in juvenile court, particularly for incest cases. She joined the firm Evans and Evans, which later became Evans Feldman and Boyer. - Compensation Commissioner Appointment: In 1979, she was appointed the first woman Compensation Commissioner by Governor Ella Grasso.

Dimensions Duration: 1 Hour, 42 Minutes, 51 Seconds