

# Basic Detail Report

## **Title Interview with Diane Woodfield Whitney**

Date 2016 October 26

Description Oral history interview with Diane Woodfield Whitney who was interviewed by Jean Perry Phillips on October 26, 2016 for the Connecticut Bar Foundation's History of Connecticut Women in the Legal Profession Project.

Topics Discussed: - Early Life: Diane Whitney grew up on the North Shore of Long Island in Port Jefferson. Her father owned a men's clothing store, and her mother was a stay-at-home. She did not know any attorneys or women in professional careers while growing up, since most women she knew were in traditional roles like nurses or teachers. - Professional Aspirations: As a child, Diane wanted to be a physical therapist. - College Education: She attended William Smith College in Geneva, New York, and graduated in 1967, majoring in English. After college, she earned a Master of Arts in Teaching from Colgate. - Early Teaching Career: Diane taught for half a year in Ilion, New York, and then moved to Connecticut after getting married, where she taught at the Oxford School in Hartford. Her teaching career ended for a while after she had two sons. - Community Involvement: She became involved in community activities in Windsor, serving on the Planning & Zoning Commission for 11 years, eventually becoming its Chairman. - Decision to Attend Law School: Her husband encouraged her to pursue law school. She took the LSAT and applied to the University of Connecticut School of Law, and was accepted. - UConn Law School: She started law school in 1982. The class was about half female, with many

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women over thirty. She formed a small support group called "Sua Sponte". -

Discrimination: She observed discrimination during job interviews, with many

jobs going to younger men despite their grades not being as good as older

female students. - Early Law Firm Experience: She worked at Danaher,

O'Connell, Attmore, Tedford, & Flaherty during her second summer of law

school and received a permanent job offer after graduation. She practiced

general civil litigation, trust and estates, real estate, wills, and divorces. The firm

broke apart after two years. - Attorney General's Office: She joined the Attorney

General's Office accepting a role in child abuse and education litigation. She

worked there for four years. - Pepe & Hazard and Environmental Law: She joined

Pepe & Hazard as a land use lawyer focusing on Planning & Zoning Commission.

- Notable Cases: Notable cases include a hazardous waste situation involving

Raymark in Stratford, Connecticut, where she successfully impleaded numerous

homeowners and entities. - LeBouef, Lamb, Greene, & MacRae: She eventually

moved to LeBouef, Lamb, Greene, & MacRae, an international firm, which had

thousands of attorneys and offices worldwide. In this role, she primarily handled

Superfund and toxic tort cases for Alcoa, litigating across the country.

Dimensions Duration: 9 Minutes, 5 Seconds