

Basic Detail Report

Title Interview with Judge Elaine Gordon

Date 2016 December 8

Description Oral history interview with Judge Elaine Gordon who was interviewed by Kathryn Calibey on December 8, 2016 for the Connecticut Bar Foundation's History of Connecticut Women in the Legal Profession Project.

Topics Discussed: - Background : Judge Gordon was born in Chicago, her mother immigrated from Poland in 1939, and her father worked in the scrap metal business at Standard Industrial Salvage. She grew up in a predominantly Jewish neighborhood. - College Education: Judge Gordon attended Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, from 1967 to 1971. She majored in journalism and also had a political science major. Her college years were marked by significant political and social upheaval, including the 1968 election, riots in Chicago, the Democratic National Convention, Kent State shootings, student demonstrations, and the women's movement, which further influenced her desire to pursue law. - Law School: She started law school at DePaul in Chicago in 1972. She transferred to the University of Connecticut School of Law in 1973 to join her fiancé, who was accepted at Yale. She graduated in December 1975 and passed the bar in 1976. - First Legal Job: Her first legal job was with Legal Aid in New Britain, Connecticut in 1976. She began by doing divorce work. Later, she transferred to New Haven Legal Assistance and worked in housing law until 1984. - Transition to Private Practice: In 1984, Judge Gordon entered private practice, an opportunity that arose after her success in *Dukes v. Durante* (1984).

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She went into family law. She started solo and later joined a prominent family

lawyer as a partner. - Becoming a Judge and Judicial Career: Judge Gordon was

appointed to the bench in June 1988. Her first assignment was in Waterbury's

criminal court. She served as a judge for 23 years, sitting in criminal, family, and

civil courts. She held several leadership positions, including on the Civil Task

Force, Family Task Force, Law Clerk Task Force, and headed Judicial Education,

and became an administrative judge. - Changes in the Legal Profession During

Her Tenure as Judge: She noted significant changes in the practice of law,

including technology, which changed how legal work was done, leading to faster

responses and increased anxiety, and a perceived deterioration in collegial

communication. - Retirement from the Bench: Judge Gordon retired from the

Judicial Branch in August 2011. She decided to start her own alternative dispute

resolution business, Gordon ADR, with her husband Peter Curley.

Dimensions Duration: 9 Minutes, 12 Seconds