

Basic Detail Report

Title Interview with Patricia R. Kaplan

Date 2017 January 4

Description Oral history interview with Patricia R. Kaplan who was interviewed

by Mary Christy Fisher on January 4, 2017 for the Connecticut Bar Foundation's

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

- Early Life: Born in 1940, Pat Kaplan was raised in Long Island, where she was told that women's futures were to get married and have children. However, she was also expected to have a career as a nurse, secretary, or teacher as a fallback.

- College: Pat Kaplan majored in theatre at Barnard College and was the first stage manager for the musical "The Fantasticks." She later became an early

childhood education teacher, then a stay-at-home mother for ten years. - Path

to Law School: In the early 1970s, Pat became involved with the League of

Women Voters in Branford, Connecticut, and helped start the town's first state-

funded daycare center. Her work on this project, along with being inspired by

trials she observed, including the Black Panther trial, led her to apply to law

school. - Law School: At age 35, she was accepted to the University of

Connecticut School of Law. While in law school, she worked for the public

defenders and for New Haven Legal Assistance, which became her career goal. -

Career at Valley Legal Assistance: After graduation, Pat was hired as a VISTA

attorney and was tasked with developing the Valley Legal Assistance office,

where she worked from 1978 to 1991. While there, she and attorney Bennett

Pudlin helped start the domestic violence program, The Umbrella, and worked

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on cases involving discrimination and family law. - New Haven Legal Assistance

Director: In September 1991, she became the first woman director of New Haven

Legal Assistance, a position she held for 21 years. - Family Reactions: Pat's

parents responded to her becoming a lawyer by using "gender-humor," which

she found upsetting, and her first husband felt threatened by her career, which

contributed to the end of their marriage.

Dimensions Duration: 8 Minutes, 59 Seconds