

Basic Detail Report

Title Interview with Elaine S. Amendola

Date 2010 September 30

Primary Maker Elaine S. Amendola

Description Oral history interview with Elaine S. Amendola who was interviewed

by Jack D. Zeldes on September 30, 2010 for the Connecticut Bar Foundation's

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

- Early Life: Elaine was born in 1935, New Haven, Connecticut, and grew up in

Orange, Connecticut. Her father was a contractor in Derby, and her mother was

a registered nurse. She attended Orange Center School and Hill House High

School in New Haven. - College Education: Elaine attended Wellesley College,

majoring in mathematics. She was actively involved in equestrian competitions.

- Marriage to Joseph Crehore: She met Joseph Crehore, a Harvard student and

athlete, whom she married in 1958, after graduating college in 1956. - Early

Professional Experiences: She was offered a job at IBM in New York, but sought

work closer to home. She started the first Computer Programming Department

at Sikorsky Aircraft in East Hartford. She and her husband moved to Arizona

where she worked for a ballistics engineering firm, and then to Wichita, Kansas,

where she worked for Boeing in Industrial Engineering. - Transition to Law

School: In 1959, while in Kansas, Elaine decided to take the law school aptitude

test (LSAT), performing very well. She faced rejections from Harvard, Columbia,

and Wharton business schools as a woman. She applied to Yale Law School but

was rejected by Dean Tate because she was a married woman. She then applied

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to and was accepted by the University of Connecticut Law School, where she was the only woman in the entire law school. - Husband's Death: Joe was tragically killed in a flying accident in March 1962. This event profoundly impacted her life but she still passed the Bar Exam. - Gender Discrimination in Job Search: She faced significant challenges finding a job as a woman lawyer, with some interview rooms having "No women interviewed" signs, and the Bar Committee was reportedly rude to her as a widow. - Early Legal Career: She remained in Connecticut, active in national horse competitions. She was eventually hired by David Goldstein at Goldstein and Peck, a litigation law firm in Bridgeport, Connecticut, after being referred by Professor Rodell to Jack Zeldes (the interviewer). At Goldstein and Peck, she handled a variety of cases, including criminal defense, will contests, Appellate writing, and federal litigation such as trademark cases. - Remarriage, Family, and Firm Formation: Elaine remarried a football coach named Buddy Amendola. They moved to Storrs, Connecticut, when Buddy accepted a job at the University of Connecticut, but Elaine continued to work at Goldstein and Peck. They later moved back to Orange, Connecticut, and she had two children. In 1970, she and others left to form their own firm, Zeldes, Needle and Cooper, in 1971, where she stayed until 1997. - Current Practice and Bar Association Involvement: Since 1997, Elaine has been practicing domestic relations (family law) with her daughter in Fairfield. She's been involved in the Executive Committee of the Criminal Justice Section and the Family Law Section of the Connecticut Bar Association. She also became active in the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers. - Notable Cases: She

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also observed the Bobby Seale trial (Black Panther case) in New Haven. She described an interesting case where she represented James Peter Pardue, a serial killer, while Koskoff represented his wife.

Dimensions Duration: 1 Hour, 13 Minutes, 37 Seconds