Basic Detail Report

Title Interview with Constance Belton Green

Date 2016 October 26

Primary Maker Constance Belton Green

Description Oral history interview with Constance Belton Green who was interviewed by Stacey Close on October 26, 2016 for the Connecticut Bar Foundation's History of Connecticut Women in the Legal Profession Project. Topics Discussed: - Early Life: Constance Belton Green was born in Portsmouth, Virginia in 1947, into a segregated environment. Her parents were educators. - Education in a Segregated Environment: She went through a segregated school system and attended Hampton Institute. In 1954, the year of Brown v. Board of Education, Virginia took ten years to desegregate. - College: She was an exchange student at Cornell and studied in Europe. - Role Models and Hampton University Experience: At Hampton, she was influenced by President Brud Holland. Her major role model was Constance Baker Motley, the NAACP Civil Rights Lawyer, known for her work on Brown v. Board of Education and as the first African American woman appointed as a federal judge. Green initially majored in Early Childhood Education but decided to pursue law in her senior year to work in policy. - University of Connecticut Law School: Constance Belton Green decided to attend the University of Connecticut Law School in 1969 after being offered a full scholarship. She was one of very few students of color and the only woman of color in her class. She met her future husband, Alan Green, in law school. - Balancing Career, Family, and Community: Constance discusses the

balance between career, marriage, family, and social expectations, particularly for African American women in the 1960s. She prioritized family and community first, then career. She became a member of the Connecticut Bar in 1975. - Early Legal Career: She passed the bar exam in the early 1970s. She practiced family law in New Haven with the firm Sosnoff, Cooper and Whitney, a public interest law firm. - Significant Cases: One notable class-action lawsuit she worked on addressed discrimination against pregnant women, who could be fired and denied unemployment compensation. She was also a founder of Connecticut Women's Legal and Education Fund. - George Crawford Black Bar Association: While in law school, she and other students helped initiate an affinity group for African American law students. This was a precursor to what became the George Crawford Black Bar Association, named after a prestigious Black lawyer. Constance Belton Green was honored with a Trailblazer Award by the organization in 2012, which supports African American lawyers through programs and networking. - Transition to Equity and Community Work: After her law practice, Constance gravitated towards equity and community work, including education. She worked at Eastern Connecticut State University focusing on direct equity, mentoring students, and confronting discrimination. She also served on boards like the Bloomfield Board of Education and chaired a charter school in Hartford. - Pursuit of a Doctorate: Constance pursued and earned a doctorate from Teachers' College at Columbia University in 2003. - Mentoring and the Importance of Education for African American: She primarily mentors African American women but acknowledges the need to mentor African

Basic Detail Report

American men. - Support Systems and Navigating Discrimination: She highlights

the critical role of support systems, including family and affinity groups like the

Black Law Students' Association at UCONN.

Dimensions Duration: 8 Minutes, 45 Seconds