

ABA Senior Lawyers Division
Women Trailblazers in the Law

ORAL HISTORY
of
CAROLE K. BELLOWS

Interviewer: Krista D. Kauper

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Oral History of the Honorable Carole Kamin Bellows

First Interview

This is the first interview of the oral history of the Honorable Carole Kamin Bellows, which is being taken on behalf of Women Trailblazers in the Law, a project of the American Bar Association Commission on Women in the Profession. It is being conducted by Krista D. Kauper on November 16, 2005.

Ms. Kauper: Today is November 16, 2005. This is Krista Kauper and I am in the chambers of Judge Carole Bellows to take her oral history. Please start by saying your full name, and your date and place of birth.

Judge Bellows: Okay, I am Carole Kamin Bellows, and I was born on May 24, 1935, in Chicago, Illinois.

Ms. Kauper: Very good, and we'll start with a little bit of your family background.

Judge Bellows: Yes.

Ms. Kauper: Tell me a little bit about your grandparents -- were they in this country, were they immigrants, where did they live?

Judge Bellows: No. All my grandparents were immigrants from Russia, Ukraine, and that area.

Ms. Kauper: Very good.

Judge Bellows: Actually I know quite a bit about my paternal grandfather, because he wrote an autobiography up to the age of 10. (Laughs)

Ms. Kauper: Oh. (Laughs)

Judge Bellows: Which is very interesting by the way.

Ms. Kauper: That is interesting. (Laughs)

Judge Bellows: Yes, and he didn't learn to read or write until he was in his 50's.

Ms. Kauper: How interesting.

Judge Bellows: Yes.

Ms. Kauper: And where did they settle in the United States?

Judge Bellows: You know, I don't know where they originally settled, but they all ended up in Chicago.

Ms. Kauper: Okay, very good, and then your parents, were they born here in Chicago?

Judge Bellows: My parents were born here, and they grew up on the west side of Chicago, and they were high school sweethearts.

Ms. Kauper: Great.

Judge Bellows: They were high school sweethearts at Marshall High School. My mom was born in 1911, and my dad was born in 1910.

Ms. Kauper: Your father is younger than your mother?

Judge Bellows: No, no, my mother was one year younger.

Ms. Kauper: Oh, right. (Laughs)

Judge Bellows: She was one year younger, and they went to Marshall. Then they went to Craine College, and then they both went to Kent Law School.

Ms. Kauper: Oh, very good.

Judge Bellows: Yes.

Ms. Kauper: So your mother was a lawyer as well.

Judge Bellows: Yes.

Ms. Kauper: Fabulous.

Judge Bellows: Yes.

Ms. Kauper: Very good, and was she, do you know, the only woman in her class at the time?

Judge Bellows: No. I think she had one or may have had a couple of others. I do have a page from the Women's Bar Association records from 1934 with all the women lawyers in Chicago.

Ms. Kauper: Oh, that's fabulous.

Judge Bellows: It was one, open foldout page. It's very interesting. (Laughs)

Ms. Kauper: That is fabulous.

Judge Bellows: And, actually, there were mothers of other Chicago lawyers on that page. For example, Katherine Rinella was the mother of a couple of a well known attorneys, and Charlotte Adelman's mother was in that class.

Ms. Kauper: No kidding.

Judge Bellows: So, there were maybe twenty-something women lawyers in Illinois at that time.

Ms. Kauper: That's 1934.

Judge Bellows: In 1933 or 1934.

Ms. Kauper: Great.

Judge Bellows: Yes.

Ms. Kauper: And, that makes me want to backtrack just a little bit. Were your grandparents college educated as well?

Judge Bellows: Oh no. They, I don't know even if they went to grade school. (Laughs) I mean, they didn't do that in the ghetto. I'll show you, if you're interested ever, the area where they started out. My paternal grandfather, who I know the most about, ...

Ms. Kauper: He's the one who wrote the autobiography.

Judge Bellows: Wrote the autobiography and had no formal education. I mean zero, because you had to have money to have a formal education in the Ukraine. And, it was a very oppressive society -- very oppressive for Jews in the ghetto.

Ms. Kauper: Do you know what led to both your parents being able to go not only to college, but also to law school?

Judge Bellows: I think it's just the entire social structure of immigrants' children --expecting to be educated and live a better life than their parents.

Ms. Kauper: That's fabulous. That's great.

Judge Bellows: Yes, but this was the whole culture in the West. I mean, this is where you have doctors and lawyers and accountants, and this is a free country. And, we had free or reasonable education, and then that was right in the Great Depression when they went to law school. (Laughs)

Ms. Kauper: Did you...I'm sorry.

Judge Bellows: Go ahead. I'm assuming they worked during school, helping put themselves through school because their parents certainly couldn't afford to.

Ms. Kauper: Right. Did they practice here in Chicago, your parents?

Judge Bellows: My father did. My mother just practiced a little bit. My mother spent most of her time doing family things, and she was very active in civic life. She founded the League of Women Voters in Skokie. And, she was very active on the speakers' circuit for judicial reform and constitutional reform, which lead to the Constitutional Convention of 1970 or the Constitution of 1970 and the

convention preceding it. So, she was very active politically on good government kind of things.

Ms. Kauper: Very good, and where did your father practice?

Judge Bellows: He practiced in Chicago, he was a labor lawyer, he worked...

Ms. Kauper: And with a firm, or...

Judge Bellows: Well, he really had his own firm most of the time. He started out, in 1935, he was a corporation counsel for the City of Chicago -- Assistant Corporation Counsel for the City of Chicago. Then he went into practice for a very short time with his brother, who was in personal injury law, and he did not like personal injury law at all. He had a very...well, he was squeamish. (Laughs) And, that's not good for a PI lawyer.

So, somehow he got into labor law, representing labor unions. He did some work for John L. Lewis and the United Mine Workers around the war time, and he did go to Washington and do work for the United Mine Workers and practiced labor law. He represented teamsters, he represented grain millers out of Minneapolis, and he had an interesting career.

Ms. Kauper: He certainly did.

Judge Bellows: And then, in 1957 I believe, he began teaching at Loyola Law School -- he taught labor law at Loyola Law School.

Ms. Kauper: Very good.

Judge Bellows: So, yes. It was very...he had a very interesting career.

Ms. Kauper: Sounds like it. You mentioned that your mother was active in civic life. Was your father politically active as well -- civically active or in office?

Judge Bellows: Yes, yes. My father was a Justice of the Peace in Skokie in the, I think, late 40's early 50's. So, yes, he was politically active.

Ms. Kauper: And, you also made a reference to religion. Your grandparents were religious, were your parents religious at all?

Judge Bellows: Not at all.

Ms. Kauper: No. Oh, okay.

Judge Bellows: Not a bit, not a bit.

Ms. Kauper: And how did they raise you? What kind of environment did they raise you in?

Judge Bellows: It was very unstructured. I guess we were raised without of a lot of direction, because they believed that you were to take responsibility for yourself. I mean if it was cold out, my mother would never, never say, "put on a sweater, you're going to be cold." Never. (Laughs) One day, I asked her when I was in high school why I never went to summer camp, and she said, "you never signed yourself up in time." (Laughs) So, we were raised to take responsibility for ourselves.

Ms. Kauper: That's great.

Judge Bellows: Especially me, I'm the oldest, so (laughs) especially me.

Ms. Kauper: And I assume that would have influenced you in later life, as well, I mean that early...

Judge Bellows: Taking responsibility.

Ms. Kauper: Taking responsibility, yes.

Judge Bellows: Oh yes. I was the older sister, and I did take care of my younger brothers. And, you know I never expected anybody to really take care of me. (Laughs)

Ms. Kauper: Great. So, you were brought up here in Chicago. You were born in Chicago and brought up here?

Judge Bellows: I grew up in the community of Evanston / Skokie. Well, we moved to Evanston / Skokie in 1941. I was six years old. We lived on the south side before that, in an apartment. Then, we had a nice house, and it was literally in Skokie, but it was the Evanston School District. So that was the environment that I grew up in.

Ms. Kauper: And what was that neighborhood like in those days?

Judge Bellows: Lovely homes. It was very country-ish when we first moved in, in 1941. I mean, it had prairies and lots of places for kids to run and play, and not until after the war did it begin getting built up.

Ms. Kauper: Interesting. You have, you mentioned a sibling. Do you have a sister?

Judge Bellows: No, I have two brothers.

Ms. Kauper: Oh, two brothers.

Judge Bellows: Two younger brothers. They are both lawyers, and they are both married to lawyers....

Ms. Kauper: Ooh.

Judge Bellows: ...and all of our fathers-in-law were lawyers. (Laughs) So, we have a lot of lawyers.

Ms. Kauper: That's some family.

Judge Bellows: I think we had about thirty people in our immediate family at one point.

Ms. Kauper: My goodness.

Judge Bellows: When people were alive, as a matter of fact, I think there's a story, which I could bring to the next interview, that the Tribune ran on husband and wife lawyer combination...

Ms. Kauper: Oh, very good.

Judge Bellows: ...families. I'll have to remember to bring that down.

Ms. Kauper: Very good.

Ms. Kauper: Tell me a little bit about your relationship with your brothers when you were kids.

Judge Bellows: Well, I was the big sister and my next youngest brother was about four and a half years younger than I was. I was born in '35 in May, and he was born in February of '39. So, you know, I was the bossy older sister, the caretaker. (Laughs) And then the other one was born in 1940.

Ms. Kauper: Okay, very good. Tell me a little bit about what you were like as a child, your childhood personality.

Judge Bellows: I, well we, in those times we lived almost between rural and suburban communities, so we didn't have many organized activities. We played outside all the time. We rode our bikes, we played baseball, we played football, we went to the park, and we had no supervision. I mean we just -- the mothers would (laughs) say goodbye in the morning and call us back when it got dark, and it was very, very unstructured. As I say, I never went to an organized camp or preschool or anything like that. We played outside, and we skated and we rode bikes, and as I say, played ball, and it was a very outdoor life.

Ms. Kauper: Would you say that's what we would call a tomboy these days? Were you a little bit of a tomboy?

Judge Bellows: Oh, nowadays you would call it a tomboy, sure.

Ms. Kauper: Very good. I was one too. Tell me a little bit about your grammar school, where you went to school.

Judge Bellows: I went ...well, I had one year of kindergarten in the city, and then I went to Lincolnwood School in Evanston. It was over a mile from my house, and they didn't allow kids to stay for lunch. I was this little kid, and I had to get back home more than a mile and get back to school within about an hour, so I learned to eat very fast (laughs), and I got a lot of exercise. (Laughs) A lot.

Ms. Kauper: Were you interested in school? Were you interested in studying, learning?

Judge Bellows: Oh yes. I was always a good student, yes, and I always liked books.

Ms. Kauper: What did you like to read?

Judge Bellows: Oz books were my favorite thing. Read the Oz books all the time, multiple times. And, I still have my childhood collection as a matter of fact.

Ms. Kauper: Well, that's great.

Judge Bellows: I don't know if my daughter ever read it or not, but I still have it. (Laughs)

Ms. Kauper: Very good, and were there other subjects that you were particularly interested in, or were you interested in everything?

Judge Bellows: No, I wasn't. No, I didn't like...I wasn't interested in math. (Laughs) I liked science though, and I did take piano lessons. I never practiced enough (laughs), but I did take piano lessons.

Ms. Kauper: Were your parents musical? Did they encourage that?

Judge Bellows: They loved music and they did encourage it, but they didn't play. I mean they were brought up very, very, very poor. So, they really didn't have that kind of background.

Ms. Kauper: And what are your recollections of your friends in those days, your childhood friends?

Judge Bellows: Well, I remember, I had two friends who lived next door to me and they were very ladylike, supposedly. They knitted, and they played with their cats. But, the oldest kid, who was a little girl -- we're talking about probably age ten or eleven -- and her best friend used to go to the construction sites, because after the war there were a lot of constructions sites. They used to sabotage (laughs) the poured cement. I remember that. (Laughs) That was very bizarre, very bizarre.

Ms. Kauper: You've mentioned the war a couple of times. You were quite young during the war, what year was that when...?

Judge Bellows: Yes, I was ten when it was over. I was ten. The war was very much a part of our childhood, because you know, we had rationing of everything. I mean, your parents couldn't...we did have a car, but they couldn't drive you anywhere because we had gas rationing. So, they didn't pick me up at the mile away school, ever (laughs), or just about ever. And, I remember, at the end of World War II, standing at the end of the street pounding on pots and pans, telling everyone the war was over. And then we had scrap drives and stamp drives, and we were very involved, and victory gardens. You know, we all had the victory gardens.

Ms. Kauper: What was the feeling as a child, about the war itself?

Judge Bellows: We really didn't understand it.

Ms. Kauper: Didn't really?

Judge Bellows: You know, I was ten when it was over. So, we knew it was there, and we didn't really understand it, but we knew it was good it was over -- that we knew. And, then of course, my uncles were away and in the service, and we knew that. Just about every able-bodied man was away at a certain age group.

Ms. Kauper: And what was the influence of that, in those next few years when you were, say, ten to fifteen of those immediate years after the war? What was that like?

Judge Bellows: Well, when you're ten, you know, you probably aren't that politically aware.

Ms. Kauper: Right.

Judge Bellows: Yes. So I can't say that I was really political until much later.

Ms. Kauper: Was there a feeling of excitement though, about the country, about things moving forward?

Judge Bellows: Oh very. The one thing that was instilled was patriotism. You know, Americans were great and the enemies were bad. That we had very much indoctrinated, and my generation is very patriotic, I think. Very patriotic.

Ms. Kauper: Continues to be.

Judge Bellows: And continues to be, right. Right.

Ms. Kauper: Going back to school, are there any teachers from your grammar school, that stand out? Any teachers you remember that influenced you?

Judge Bellows: Not so much, grammar school. I had a.....

Ms. Kauper: Maybe too early.

Judge Bellows: ...I had a really wonderful English teacher in high school that was a tremendous influence. Mr. Hach. He was an English teacher and he did the journalism program at Evanston High School.

Ms. Kauper: Oh, good.

Judge Bellows: So I was active in that, and oh yes, I'd say, of all the teachers that I ever had, he probably influenced me the most in writing and a sense of reporting on current events and things like that. So, yes, my English teacher probably more than anybody.

Ms. Kauper: Did he encourage you in your career direction, as well?

Judge Bellows: Oh no, it was way, way too early.

Ms. Kauper: Too early?

Judge Bellows: For that, but I did learn how to write, and I appreciated writing and of course that's important when you're a lawyer. (Laughs)

Ms. Kauper: Right. Did you travel much as a child? Did you have the opportunity to travel very much?

Judge Bellows: Oh, I remember my parents did take us on long car trips, yes. (Laughs) Yes, which I never really liked.

Krista: (Laughs).

Judge Bellows: We left in our '41 Chrysler in 1948, and we drove to California, the southern California area, went up the coast to Seattle, then drove back in the northern part of the United States. You know, Yellowstone Park, and that was huge travel. I know I've been to Canada, driving again, and I had been to Florida during high

school, driving. (Laughs) Niagara Falls, driving. (Laughs) So, we had a lot of driving trips, and I went on my first plane when I was fifteen.

Ms. Kauper: Oh, very good. And what did those...I will say from my point of view, it really peaked my curiosity some of those driving trips that I took with my family.

Judge Bellows: Oh, yes.

Ms. Kauper: What was your reaction to those kind of trips?

Judge Bellows: That I never wanted to drive to California. (Laughs)

Ms. Kauper: I can certainly understand that. (Laughs)

Judge Bellows: So, I liked the places we went, but I sure didn't like the long drives, because in those days there were no expressways, you have to remember.

Ms. Kauper: Right.

Judge Bellows: And in those days, we didn't have chains of motels, so we would just look for any place, and some of them were pretty dreadful. (Laughs) You know, you didn't call up Holiday Inn or Marriott and make reservations.

Ms. Kauper: Right. (Laughs)

Judge Bellows: You just stumbled along the two-lane highways, and it was an experience. (Laughs)

Ms. Kauper: Well, let's talk a little bit about high school. Tell me just a little bit -- first starting out, what your strongest recollections are from high school? What was your impression of high school?

Judge Bellows: Well, we're talking about Evanston. It was a very conservative Republican community in the 50's, the early 50's -- very conservative Republican. Now it isn't, but it's totally changed. We had, the social life of Evanston High School

revolved around Y clubs, YMCA clubs. We did that, and did sleepovers things. And I was on the swimming team at the YMCA, because Evanston High School at that time didn't have a swimming pool.

Ms. Kauper: Okay.

Judge Bellows: I did get interested in swimming around that time, and I loved the beach. (Laughs) Loved the beach. So, I had my Y club, and I was active in the newspaper and we just had a very carefree high school experience, I'd say.

Ms. Kauper: Great. Did you have a big circle of friends? What were your friends like?

Judge Bellows: Yes. We had our Y club and very nice girls and, as I say, we had sleepovers and parties and fashion shows and sweet sixteen teas. That was very important in the north shore in the early 50's. We had, every sweet sixteen, we'd get dressed up in our hats and our white gloves and our high heels, and we'd have a sweet sixteen tea.

Ms. Kauper: Very good.

Judge Bellows: So it was very social, very social.

Ms. Kauper: Sounds like it.

Judge Bellows: Yes, very. You know (laughs), innocent socials, but we had a nice time.

Ms. Kauper: And let's talk a little bit about school. What kind of a student were you?

Judge Bellows: I was good student. I was a good student, but I wasn't the valedictorian.

Ms. Kauper: Was it important for you to do well?

Judge Bellows: Oh yes, yes. I wasn't the valedictorian, but the valedictorian actually went to Michigan Law School. (Laughs)

Ms. Kauper: Oh, very good.

Judge Bellows: We haven't seen her since. (Laughs)

Ms. Kauper: And how did your parents influence you in high school? Did they encourage you in education, I assume?

Judge Bellows: Always, always, always. As I say, they were not the directive kind of parents. They expected all us to do well, and we did. (Laughs) But they didn't push us in any way.

Ms. Kauper: You've mentioned your high school teacher already, the English teacher. That sounds like it may have been your favorite subject, your favorite class.

Judge Bellows: Oh yes, I loved journalism and social studies, Spanish...you know, we had a lot of interesting classes. We're talking ancient history now. (Laughs)

Ms. Kauper: You mentioned playing the piano. Did you play another instrument? Were you in the band or orchestra?

Judge Bellows: No, no. I never even learned to read music (laughs), but I did take it for a while, yes.

Ms. Kauper: And you also mentioned swimming. Were there any other activities that you took when you were in school?

Judge Bellows: I remember a bunch of my high school friends and I took tap dancing.

Ms. Kauper: Really.

Judge Bellows: When we were in high school, it was really fun. (Laughs)

Ms. Kauper: That's great.

Judge Bellows: We were at the recital with all the little kids. (Laughs) So, it was fun.

Ms. Kauper: Were you at all politically interested at this point in your life?

Judge Bellows: In high school, no.

Ms. Kauper: No.

Judge Bellows: No, not in high school.

Ms. Kauper: And were there any, and again, I just don't know the answer to this, were people socially active at that point in high school? Was there any volunteer work done at that age or was it really too young?

Judge Bellows: Oh, I think we did things like go into the ghetto and paint houses and things like that. We'd do things, some social things like that -- you know, help the poor people. I remember specifically going into the ghetto and painting people's homes and their walls weren't even like we were used to -- they were so thin. But, I specifically remember that kind of social action.

Ms. Kauper: What were your plans at this point in your life? What were your goals?

Judge Bellows: I wanted to be a doctor.

Ms. Kauper: Oh.

Judge Bellows; Yes, my mother always encouraged that. So, I actually spent two years of pre-med at Illinois. (Laughs).

Ms. Kauper: Very good.

Judge Bellows: You know, I wasn't...it wasn't for me. (Laughs)

Ms. Kauper: Nor for me. (Laughs). We obviously already talked about the war and, and that was probably the biggest current event of that time.

Judge Bellows: Oh, absolutely.

Ms. Kauper: Were there any others, anything else that comes to mind?

Judge Bellows: Oh, absolutely. Then the building after the war. We lived in a kind of undeveloped area until 1945, when they started building all over the place. So there was this resurgence. And then the Eisenhower years and things like that.

Ms. Kauper: Very good.

Judge Bellows: Yes.

Ms. Kauper: Anything else about the high school years that we haven't covered?

Judge Bellows: Oh yes. The most important thing in my life was getting my driver's license.

Ms. Kauper: Oh.

Judge Bellows: At age fifteen. (Laughs)

Ms. Kauper: Very good.

Judge Bellows: That was the most...probably the turning point of my life was that driver's license. (Laughs)

Ms. Kauper: And did you have a car, have access to a car?

Judge Bellows: Oh, I had access to a car, always yes. (Laughs) And I loved to drive, yes...we, we did a lot of things in the car.

Ms. Kauper: Helped the social life. (Laughs)

Judge Bellows: Oh yes, oh yes, very much. (Laughs)

Ms. Kauper: Well let's move on then, to college -- talk a little bit about college.

Judge Bellows: Let me tell you one thing.

Ms. Kauper: Oh, sure.

Judge Bellows: About right at that time, right after I graduated from high school, I needed a summer job.

Ms. Kauper: Good addition.

Judge Bellows: And I was a good swimmer, so I became a lifeguard at Wilmette Beach. And, in 1953, there was still a leftover from the war, so there were all women lifeguards at Wilmette Beach. Now, this is a very...

Ms. Kauper: Interesting.

Judge Bellows: ...important part of my life. I loved the beach, and so I became part of an all women lifeguard crew on a very large beach on the north shore. We had to row the boats and we had to guard the beach, and we worked six days a week, nine hours a day, and we made a hundred and ninety a month.

Ms. Kauper: Wow!

Judge Bellows: But this was my first real job, and of course it got me to my favorite place in the world, which at that time was the beach. (Laughs) So, I certainly kept up my swimming and my rowing, and that was unusual in the early 50's. And then the following year, they fired all the women and hired all the men, and they had their first drowning,

Ms. Kauper: Oh my gosh.

Judge Bellows: Oh, yes. So, I think the women were much better guards.

Ms. Kauper: Yes, that's interesting.

Judge Bellows: Because they watched the little kids.

Ms. Kauper: That is interesting.

Judge Bellows: So that's an interesting part -- that was an important part of my development, I think.

Ms. Kauper: Well, it gave you a real sense of responsibility.

Judge Bellows: Yes, and we'd be up on the lifeguard towers blowing our whistles, directing people, and watching the safety issues. We had a good time too. (Laughs)

Ms. Kauper: Great, great.

Judge Bellows: We had a very social life, in fact, a very big social life.

Ms. Kauper: Right. That's great.

Judge Bellows: Yes.

Ms. Kauper: Talking about college...

Judge Bellows: Yes.

Ms. Kauper: How did you think about where you were going to go to school? What kind of schools...what lead you to Illinois?

Judge Bellows: It was supposed to be a good school. I wanted to be a doctor, and it had a good pre-med program. I didn't even apply anywhere else.

Ms. Kauper: Really?

Judge Bellows: Yes, and this was 1953, so, being a depression baby, it wasn't hard to get in anywhere. (Laughs) So, that's where I went.

Ms. Kauper: And what was your thought about leaving home at that time?

Judge Bellows: That's just something people did when they were eighteen, so it was fine.

Ms. Kauper: Were you excited, nervous?

Judge Bellows: Oh, definitely excited.

Ms. Kauper: And how did your parents feel, do you think?

Judge Bellows: Great. They thought this was great because I was the oldest child and they thought I'd never come back. But I did (laughs), because in those days,

everybody used to get married in the sophomore year of college and drop out.

The women used to get married in their sophomore year.

[Brief Telephone Interruption]

Ms. Kauper: Okay, we were talking about college.

Judge Bellows: Oh yes.

Ms. Kauper: Just picking up where we dropped off. We were talking a little bit about your feeling of going away to school.

Judge Bellows: Yes.

Ms. Kauper: So.

Judge Bellows: Loved it, loved it.

Ms. Kauper: And how did you finance your college education, did your parents support you?

Judge Bellows: My parents paid for it.

Ms. Kauper: Parents paid for it?

Judge Bellows: Yes.

Ms. Kauper: You mentioned the summer job before going into college.

Judge Bellows: Yes.

Ms. Kauper: Did you continue to work over the summers during college?

Judge Bellows: I did. I did, but I never had such a good job again. (Laughs) That is, for an eighteen year old, it's the best job in the world.

Ms. Kauper: What did you do the other summers? What kind of jobs did you have?

Judge Bellows: Oh, I think I worked for a real estate company one summer, and I think I might have worked for my father in the law office. I can't remember all of my jobs -- I

worked in a delicatessen, but I think that was in high school, but I always had some kind of job.

Ms. Kauper: Some kind of odd job.

Judge Bellows: Yes.

Ms. Kauper: And what kind of student were you in college?

Judge Bellows: Oh, for my pre-med, I was partying too much. (Laughs) And, I was just not great for pre-med, but then when I got into political science I got to be a very good student. And I had calmed down on my partying. (Laughs) So, I was very social in college, very social, and it's hard to go out every night and maintain the good, good grades in the sciences. (Laughs)

Ms. Kauper: You had a big circle of friends in college, too?

Judge Bellows: Oh yes, oh yes. Oh yes, we had a good time in college.

Ms. Kauper: What were your friends like?

Judge Bellows: Well, I lived in a dorm. They were very independent, and we liked to have a good time. (Laughs) We had lots of parties, lots of beer drinking, that kind of thing, you know. We had a good time.

Ms. Kauper: Did they come from similar backgrounds?

Judge Bellows: Oh no. Everybody was from different backgrounds. Everybody had come from different backgrounds, for sure.

Ms. Kauper: And what kind of activities did you participate in, in college?

Judge Bellows: Well, after I got out of pre-med, I became very active in the student government. I ran for office...I was a student senator. I was an officer of the independent women's group.

Ms. Kauper: Good.

Judge Bellows: And, I was very politically active in college.

Ms. Kauper: Oh, very good, and what do you think changed between high school and college that made you more politically active in college?

Judge Bellows: Oh, I just found that my interests went along those lines to political science, to the student senate and to governance. I loved that. I loved that. I loved making rules for everybody and influencing government as much as we could, and just...and don't forget I had a mother who was always active in good government.

Ms. Kauper: Right, right.

Judge Bellows: So, I would say that might have been in the back of my mind, in my sub-conscience.

Ms. Kauper: And did your increased interest in political activity within student government and those things also translate to increased interest in politics on a more national level?

Judge Bellows: Oh, I'd say yes. I'd say that would have to be true, although I wasn't particularly active in party politics, because don't forget, we couldn't vote. We couldn't vote until we were twenty-one. (Laughs).

Ms. Kauper: I did not remember that. (Laughs)

Judge Bellows: Oh yes. We could only vote when we were twenty-one. So that would have been 1956, the first time I was eligible to vote, and I was a senior by then.

Ms. Kauper: Interesting, and...

Judge Bellows: But no, so we didn't have access to politics.

Ms. Kauper: What lead you to the subject of political science?

Judge Bellows: I don't remember.

Ms. Kauper: Anything specific that you were interested in?

Judge Bellows; I don't remember, just interest.

Ms. Kauper: And what didn't you like about pre-med?

Judge Bellows: I really didn't like the science courses. I didn't like physics. I didn't like chemistry. It just didn't interest me, but I didn't know that until I got into it.

Ms. Kauper: You said in high school you were involved with the newspaper. Were you involved with the newspaper in college?

Judge Bellows; No, I wasn't.

Ms. Kauper: Okay.

Judge Bellows: I did love the journalism in high school.

Ms. Kauper: Were you athletic in college? Did you participate in swimming and sports?

Judge Bellows: Oh, I kept up my swimming, always. Yes, I always did swimming. I got my water safety instructor certificate and things like that, and I kept up my regular swimming. Don't forget, you may not know this, but when I grew up in high school and in college, they didn't allow anything but intramural sports for girls. There were no interscholastic sports for girls.

Ms. Kauper: I didn't know that.

Judge Bellows: And there were almost no, well there were no programs to be really athletic.

(Laughs)

Ms. Kauper: Isn't that interesting.

Judge Bellows: There was a law in Illinois that there was no...

Ms. Kauper: That's fascinating.

Judge Bellows: ...interscholastic sports among girls. For the basketball games for girls, who were, I think six girls on each team, you could only play on half the court. I mean, you can't imagine how restrictive it was. And then in college, we were twenty-one years old, but we had to be in by 10:30 p.m. during the week and 1:00 a.m. on the weekends. Don't forget, we're twenty-one and we were still treated like children, so I think you don't realize what life was like.

Ms. Kauper: Right. No.

Judge Bellows: I mean it was pretty restrictive for girls.

Ms. Kauper: Sounds like it.

Judge Bellows: Very restrictive for girls.

Ms. Kauper: And it was different for boys?

Judge Bellows: Oh, they had no hours. They had no hours at all. No restrictions.

Oh no, we were very restricted, I mean to be twenty-one and told you have to be in at 10:30 p.m.?

Ms. Kauper: Right. That's interesting.

Judge Bellows: Oh, yes.

Ms. Kauper: So was it an all girls dorm that you lived in?

Judge Bellows: Oh, I did. There was nothing but an all girls and all boys, nothing.

Ms. Kauper: And did you live in a dorm for all the years that you were there?

Judge Bellows: All four years, I lived in the same room. (Laughs)

Ms. Kauper: In the same room?

Judge Bellows: Oh, yes.

Ms. Kauper: Did you have roommate?

Judge Bellows: I did. I had one roommate as freshman year, and the last three years I had a different roommate. I mean, I had the same roommate for my last three years.

Ms. Kauper: Are you still close?

Judge Bellows: No, not at all. She was salutatorian of the class at the University of Illinois. She had gotten one "B", and she was a biochemistry major. She got her Ph.D. and then, oh, she became mentally ill, so she has no contact with anybody. She was a professor at a college in New York, and she had to drop out of life because she was so ill. But it was so, such a shame, she was so talented, so brilliant.

Ms. Kauper: Are you still in touch with friends from college?

Judge Bellows: Oh I am, yes I am.

Ms. Kauper: Friends from student government, from those kind of activities or just generally?

Judge Bellows: No, from the dorm, from the dorm basically.

Ms. Kauper: Tell me a little bit about your favorite professor in college.

Judge Bellows: Well, I had a lot of good political science professors. I don't remember that many names.

Ms. Kauper: Just your experience with them.

Judge Bellows: Very, very, very, ...

Ms. Kauper: How did they influence you?

Judge Bellows: Oh, probably, just taught me about government. I think that was the thing that interested me. I do remember my municipal government professor. He was very sharp, and he ran his classes like a law school class, asking questions and things, so, it was interesting.

Ms. Kauper: Very good. I was going to ask that question too -- what style of teaching, most of your classes were.

Judge Bellows: Most of them were lectures. Most of them were straight lecture. You took notes, you studied the books, you studied your notes and took your exams.

Ms. Kauper: And were they big classes, small classes or mixed?

Judge Bellows: At the University of Illinois, which was big even in the 50's, the lecture halls were very big and then the classes were broken down in smaller groups. The lecture halls were very big, although some of the classes, when you got to be seniors, were a better size where you could interact with your professors. Because in a big school, we had a lot of teaching assistants.

Ms. Kauper: Right.

Judge Bellows: And things like that. I don't remember any of them being particularly good.
(Laughs)

Ms. Kauper: Did you, in college, have an opportunity to travel with friends or with your family? Any particular trips?

Judge Bellows: No, we didn't travel much in college.

Ms. Kauper: Didn't travel?

Judge Bellows: Nobody went to Europe in those days.

Ms. Kauper: Spring breaks or...?

Judge Bellows: Nobody went to Europe. Yes, we went to...I went to Florida once during spring break and stayed with relatives. (Laughs) So, I did not do the scene in college. I went up to Lauderdale for the day.

Ms. Kauper: Anything else about college that you want to mention that I might not have covered?

Judge Bellows: Well, it was just a fun time in the Big Ten. Very innocent time.

Ms. Kauper: Sounds like a great experience.

Judge Bellows: We had great parties, and we were very carefree. Nothing, nothing like it is today...we're so serious.

Ms. Kauper: In terms of the environment, I didn't ask this question, do you know or have any sense of what the breakdown of men to women was in college?

Judge Bellows: Oh yes, I think it was four men to every woman, or something like that...way more men at the University of Illinois than women.

Ms. Kauper: And...

Judge Bellows: And I told you that so many of the women would meet their husbands in sophomore year and drop out of school and that always bothered me a lot. I would see really smart girls, like in pre-med with straight A averages, drop out after their second year. I always hated that, I just hated that. I mean it was the thing to do in the 50's -- get your husband, get your MRS degree and get out. But, to see really smart, capable women doing that always bothered me.

Ms. Kauper: And it sounds to me like your background particularly with your mother being a lawyer...

Judge Bellows: Yes.

Ms. Kauper: That was never something that was...

Judge Bellows: Oh, never, never. Never, ever.

Ms. Kauper: And what about minorities on campus?

Judge Bellows: Oh, we didn't have many minorities and in Evanston High School they were pretty much kept segregated. We learned years later that they weren't allowed to go to dances -- they are the reason that Evanston High didn't build a swimming pool, because they didn't want to integrate it. This is, you know, the 40's, and it was very, very racist, but we were unaware of the racism. We probably had... maybe a quarter of our school was black students. At our 50th reunion, we had maybe two black students show up, so they did not feel part of the community.

Ms. Kauper: No.

Judge Bellows: Although, some of the athletics were, you know, pretty popular.

Ms. Kauper: But still, probably somewhat isolated from the rest of the students.

Judge Bellows: Oh, I think so.

Ms. Kauper: In effect...

Judge Bellows: I think we had one football hero who was ahead of me in class who became a hero, I think in Wisconsin, a football hero in Wisconsin, and he came back and taught at Evanston High School.

Ms. Kauper: Very good.

Judge Bellows: But that was few and far between. I think we had tremendous segregation and discrimination. Though, I think by the time I got to Illinois, I don't think the barber shops were segregated, but if not, it had just been very recent. It was very recent that the barber shops were desegregated. So, you know, there was

tremendous racism, although I do remember, I think the president of our student senate was an African American student.

Ms. Kauper: Really?

Judge Bellows: Actually, now that you're talking about it, I remember his name. And so there were a few blacks, a few blacks, but pretty much an isolated community.

Ms. Kauper: When you moved from pre-med to political science, did you start thinking at that point about law school?

Judge Bellows: Oh sure.

Ms. Kauper: Or had you always thought about law school?

Judge Bellows: Oh no, no I hadn't, not until after my sophomore year.

Ms. Kauper: And was that encouraged by your parents?

Judge Bellows: Always, my parents always encouraged us, whatever we wanted to do. (Laughs)

Ms. Kauper: Did they particularly push you in the direction of law or were they just going to be happy with whatever you did?

Judge Bellows: No, my parents never pushed me in the direction of anything. (Laughs) You have to remember this is the mother who didn't tell me to put on my sweater when I was cold.

Ms. Kauper: Right. (Laughs)

Judge Bellows: In fact, my aunt remembers meeting me when I was four years old, and she bought a box of candy for me. She told my mother she bought a box, so my mother said, "give it to her." So, she gave it to me, and I was in the corner eating the whole box of candy and she said, "Sarah, she's eating the whole box of candy." My mother said, "well, when she gets tired of it, she won't eat any

more.” Believe it. (Laughs). That’s the whole philosophy of taking responsibility for yourself. (Laughs)

Ms. Kauper: It sounds like you had a very good relationship with your parents.

Judge Bellows: Oh I did. I did, except when I really started staying out late when I was in college. They didn’t like that, you know, when I was doing really worrisome things that they didn’t like so much. (Laughs) But, they were not controlling.

Ms. Kauper: Were you ever actually in trouble or was it typical college-age rebellion?

Judge Bellows: Oh yes, I remember one time when...I used to have a wonderful house for parties. My friends and I, one summer, invited about ten people to a party at my house, because we had a lot of parties at my house -- it ended up with hundreds of kids and people bringing liquor and parking on the drive and on the grass, and the police were called. (Laughs) So, I was in trouble, but I didn’t really do it. (Laughs) I was very social and well that’s what happens when you’re a teenager. (Laughs)

Ms. Kauper: True.

Judge Bellows: Yes, so I was in trouble for some of my parties.

Ms. Kauper: Well, let’s talk a little bit about law school. How did you choose? You were at Northwestern?

Judge Bellows: Right.

Ms. Kauper: Did you plan to go to Northwestern or did you look at other schools?

Judge Bellows: No, never looked at another school. I didn’t want to stay in Champaign, because four years is enough. (Laughs)

[End of First Interview]