

ROSEMARY SCOTT - SPEECH - FEBRUARY 23, 1995

IN ORDER TO KNOW THE TIME OUT OF WHICH I CAME TO GRAND RAPIDS, ONE NEEDS TO REVIEW A BOOK SUCH AS *NO ORDINARY TIMES* BY DORIS GOODWIN, DETAILING THE LIVES OF ELEANOR AND FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT FROM 1940 TO HIS DEATH IN 1945.

I HAVE BORROWED A COMMENT FROM THE FIRST WOMAN TO HOLD A SEAT ON THE NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE. SHE SAID FOUR-LETTER WORDS ENDING IN "K" SUMMARIZED HER CAREER. THE FIRST WORD WAS WORK.

THIS WAS A PERIOD IN WHICH MORE WOMEN FOUND JOBS THAN AT ANY OTHER TIME IN THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES, AND WOMEN THAT I KNEW PARTICIPATED IN THE MILITARY. CONSEQUENTLY, IT DID NOT SEEM STRANGE TO BE A WOMAN LAWYER, WHEN MANY OTHER WOMEN WERE EMPLOYED.

I WAS BORN IN THE YEAR AFTER THE APPROVAL OF THE 19TH AMENDMENT FOR WOMENS SUFFRAGE IN 1920. I CAME FROM A FAMILY

BACKGROUND WHERE ALL THE WOMEN WERE ECONOMICALLY SELF-SUFFICIENT.  
MY GRANDMOTHER HOMSTEDED IN THE PLAINS OF SOUTH DAKOTA BEFORE  
MOVING BACK TO MICHIGAN WHERE SHE RAN A FARM WITHOUT THE  
EXPENDITURE OF MONEY. SHE TRADED HER BUTTER, EGGS AND CREAM FOR  
COFFEE, TEA AND SPICES.

MY MOTHER, WIDOWED WHEN I WAS SEVEN YEARS OLD, WAS A  
GRADUATE OF ALBION COLLEGE AND SHE WORKED FOR \$25.00 A WEEK DURING  
THE DEPRESSION, SUPPORTING MY SISTER AND <sup>me</sup> ~~me~~, WITH A FIRM COMMITMENT  
THAT WE WOULD HAVE THE BEST OF EDUCATIONS.

IN A SMALL HIGH SCHOOL, I WAS ON A DEBATE TEAM COACHED BY  
A TEACHER GOING TO LAW SCHOOL. WE WERE THE STATE DEBATE CHAMPIONS.  
ALL OF THE DEBATERS, GIRLS AND BOYS, FROM 1934 TO 1938 BECAME  
LAWYERS.

MY EDUCATION WAS BASED ON BEING COMPETITIVE AT THE TOP,  
WITH A FOUR-POINT AVERAGE IN HIGH SCHOOL AND BEING FIRST IN MY  
CLASS UPON GRADUATION FROM COLLEGE AMONG THE WOMEN WHO HAD ENTERED

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN WITH ME AS A FRESHMAN. I WAS ALSO FIRST IN POINTS GIVEN FOR EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES. THIS, HOWEVER, DID NOT ENDEAR ME TO MY FEMININE PEERS.

I GRADUATED FROM COLLEGE WHEN I WAS TWENTY AND I TAUGHT FOR THREE YEARS WHILE I WAS GOING TO LAW SCHOOL AND I CAME HERE WHEN I WAS TWENTY-FIVE.

HOWEVER, TO OBTAIN AN EDUCATION, I WORKED SIXTY HOURS A WEEK DURING UNDERGRADUATE ~~AND~~ GRADUATE SCHOOL <sup>and Law School</sup> AND I CARRIED A FULL FIFTEEN HOURS OF CLASS WORK.

THE SECOND WORD WAS LUCK:

MY FIRST CONTACT WITH THE LEGAL FIELD WAS WITH TWO JOB POSSIBILITIES GROWING OUT OF THE END OF WORLD WAR II. THE FIRST WAS WITH JULIUS AMBERG, FORMER COUNSEL TO HENRY STIMSON, SECRETARY OF WAR, THE PREDECESSOR OF THE LAW WEATHERS FIRM WHERE I HAD AN

INTERVIEW IN THE PRESENCE OF GERALD R. FORD, WHO WAS AN ASSOCIATE OF THE FIRM AT THE TIME.

THE SECOND WAS WITH THE U.S. CIRCUIT COURT OF APPEALS AS THE SECOND WOMAN LAW CLERK WITH JUDGE THOMAS F. MC ALLISTER, AN APPOINTEE OF FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT. MRS. MC ALLISTER WAS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE DEMOCRATIC WOMENS' COMMITTEE. A WOMAN LAWYER WAS REQUESTED BY JUDGE MC ALLISTER THROUGH THE PLACEMENT BUREAU OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LAW SCHOOL.

I WAS THE ONLY WOMAN IN MY CLASS. THAT IS A CONTRAST WITH THE PRESENT LAW SCHOOL POPULATION OF 50% OF EACH CLASS BEING WOMEN. (IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE HOW FEW OF THE LAW SCHOOL FACULTY ARE TENURED WOMAN PROFESSORS.)

MY PRACTICE BEGAN AFTER ONE YEAR AS THE U.S. CIRCUIT COURT LAW CLERK. I HAD COME TO GRAND RAPIDS, HAVING FOUR COLLEGE FRIENDS HERE, AND AFTER BEING IN GRAND RAPIDS FOR ONE YEAR I KNEW

MORE PEOPLE HERE THAN ANY OTHER PLACE. HOWEVER, THERE WERE, THEN, NO OPENINGS AT ANY OF THE ESTABLISHED LAW FIRMS WHEN I FINISHED MY CLERKSHIP.

MY OFFICE LOCATION WAS SELECTED DURING A LUNCH HOUR. I HAVE BEEN IN THE SAME PLACE FOR 47 YEARS. IT USED TO BE KNOWN AS "LOWER MONROE", WHICH WAS SAID IN A DEROGATORY MANNER.

THE THIRD WORD WAS RISK:

AT THE TIME I STARTED MY PRACTICE, MOST OF MY CONTEMPORARIES WERE MEN RETURNING FROM MILITARY SERVICE WITH FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES AND A GROWING SENSE OF REBELLIOUSNESS ABOUT THE STATE OF LEGAL PRACTICE AND THE LAW. AS A RESULT, THE YOUNG LAWYERS, WITH WHOM I WAS ASSOCIATED, BECAME AN ACTIVE FORCE IN THE MICHIGAN STATE BAR ASSOCIATION AND AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION, WHERE, INCIDENTALLY, THE RULES WERE CHANGED TO PERMIT ANYONE TO JOIN WITHOUT BEING SPONSORED BY A WHITE, MALE MEMBER.

AS A RESULT OF MY ACTIVITIES, I BECAME THE FIRST WOMAN CHAIRMAN OF THE YOUNG LAWYERS IN 1951, SOME SIX YEARS AFTER I ENTERED PRACTICE. THAT YEAR WE WON THE ABA AWARD OF MERIT. I WAS THE ONLY WOMAN CHAIRMAN FOR THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS OF THAT ORGANIZATION.

MY EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES INCLUDED BEING ACTIVE IN THE GRAND RAPIDS URBAN LEAGUE, WHICH MEANT THAT I WAS BLACKBALLED, BY A MEMBER OF MY CHURCH, FROM BEING A MEMBER OF THE WOMENS CITY CLUB FOR SEVERAL YEARS.

I COULDN'T BECOME A MEMBER OF THE JUNIOR LEAGUE BECAUSE I WORKED, AND THE YWCA ANTICIPATED THAT AS A VOLUNTEER I WOULD WORK AFTER HOURS, REGARDLESS OF WHAT I HAD TO DO THE NEXT DAY.

MY AVENUE TO PARTICIPATION CAME BY WAY OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS, WHERE I COULD ACT AS LEGAL ADVISOR, I BECAME A MEMBER OF THE STATE BOARD THE FIRST YEAR I WAS IN PRACTICE.

BECAUSE OF MY INTEREST IN CHILDREN'S WELFARE, I WAS NAMED  
IN 1949 TO THE MICHIGAN YOUTH COMMISSION, OF WHICH I BECAME  
CHAIRMAN BEFORE IT WAS DISMISSED BY GOVERNOR MILLIKEN IN 1971 ON  
THE BASIS THAT WE "HAD NO FURTHER YOUTH PROBLEMS".

AS A RESULT OF MY INTEREST IN YOUTH, I HAVE SPENT ONE  
WORKING DAY A MONTH ON THE ISSUE OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES. I WAS A  
FOUNDER OF THE LOCAL BALLET COMPANY AND NATIONAL PRESIDENT OF THE  
U OF M ALUMNAE.

AS TO THE CHARACTER OF MY PRACTICE, I PROMISED MY MOTHER  
THAT I WOULD WEAR HAT AND GLOVES, TO BE SURE PEOPLE TOOK ME  
SERIOUSLY. THAT MAY APPEAR TO BE ECCENTRIC AT THE MOMENT - OR ON  
THE CUTTING EDGE OF THE FUTURE!

IN MY FIRST YEAR OF PRACTICE I WORKED THE NIGHT SHIFT AT  
AMERICAN SEATING FROM 3:30 P.M. TO 11:30 P.M.

I BELIEVE EVERY LAWYER OR LAW FIRM HAS CERTAIN "BREAD AND BUTTER" KINDS OF CASES. MINE TURNED OUT TO BE COLLECTION MATTERS, FOR I HAVE HAD A SUCCESS RATE OF 95% TO 98%. HOWEVER, BY DOING SO, THIS LABELED ME AS SUCH BY MANY MEMBERS OF THE BAR.

I HAVE ALWAYS HAD MORE MEN CLIENTS THAN WOMEN. I FIND THAT SOME POSSIBLE WOMEN CLIENTS ARE NOT SYMPATHETIC TO A WOMAN LAWYER.

MY PRINCIPLE IS THAT I TRY TO WIN A CASE IN THE TRIAL COURT, IF POSSIBLE. TOTAL HONESTY AND CANDOR ARE REQUIRED FOR TRIAL PRACTICE. I AM SKEPTICAL OF HOW SYMPATHETIC JUDGES ARE ON MATTERS ON APPEAL FROM MY RECENT EXPERIENCE.

MY SCHEDULE USUALLY HAS A COURT HEARING EVERY DAY. I HAVE THREE TO FOUR SECRETARIES. I AM MINDFUL OF SOME GENERAL FEELINGS THAT MANY WOMEN PREFER NOT TO WORK WITH ANOTHER WOMAN. HOWEVER, IN 47 YEARS OF PRACTICE I HAVE HAD ABOUT FIFTEEN

SECRETARIES. ONE OF MY PRESENT SECRETARIES HAS BEEN WITH ME FOR 24 YEARS.

MY PRINCIPAL AIM IS TO HAVE COMPLETE LOYALTY AND EFFORT ON BEHALF OF MY CLIENTS. SOMETIMES THIS IS REWARDED AND SOMETIMES IT IS NOT. I FIND THAT ONE HAS TO BE PROTECTIVE OF ONES FEES BECAUSE LITIGATION AND CONTROVERSY ABOUT THEM POSES DIFFERENT ISSUES, POSSIBLY MORE DIFFICULT FOR WOMEN THAN MEN.

IT IS HARD FOR ME TO ASSESS WHETHER OR NOT THERE IS DISCRIMINATION ON A GENDER BASIS BECAUSE IT SEEMS TO ME THAT I MAY BE IN THE CATEGORY FOR DISCRIMINATION AGAINST AGE AS WELL.