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Deborah Kanof

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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEWEE: Deborah Kanof (1953-)
INTERVIEWER: Pauline Dow
PROJECT: Women Attorneys of El Paso
DATE OF INTERVIEW: December 3, 1984
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BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEWEE:

Attorney, El Paso

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW:

Discussion of her law school experiences, job hunting after graduation in 1978; courtroom experiences, reaction of judges and clients to female lawyers, women as prosecutors. She explains her feelings about the Women's Bar Association and Bar Banquet skits.

Length of Interview: 45 minutes Length of Transcript 24 pages

Interview with Deborah Kanof
December 3, 1984
By Pauline Dow
El Paso, Texas
Women Attorneys in El Paso

D: Okay, if you could please state your full name.

K: My name is Deborah Phyllis Kanof.

D: Okay, the date and place of your birth?

K: September 3, 1953.

D: Okay, your marital status?

K: Well, I didn't say my place of birth.

D: Oh, you didn't?

K: No.

D: Sorry.

K: I'm real proud of it because I was born in Queens, Long Island which is the district Geraldine Ferraro represents, but I was born in New York City.

D: Okay, did you say the date?

K: September 3, 1953.

D: Okay, I missed that. Marital status?

K: I'm divorced.

D: Do you have any children?

K: No.

D: Okay. All right, when you were in college, did you take any courses to prepare you for law school?

K: In a very roundabout fashion I did. I did not take traditional law school preparatory courses. I began that way and I attempted to. In those days they thought that the best preparation for law school was

D. Kanof

Political Science and I started in the Government Department at the University of Arizona and did not like it at all. So my passion and what I had done for years in high school was Speech. Okay, what I did was, I went into the department I [was] happiest and most comfortable with, which was Speech Communications because I had been a debater and done a lot extemporaneous persuasive speaking and prose and poetry and I wanted to compete again in college because I had missed it and it turns [out] I majored in Speech Communications. That's what I have my degree in and it turns out there could not have been anything more perfect as far as preparatory education for what I do now.

D: Okay. All right. How did you, when did you decide you were going to go to law school?

K: When I was seven years old.

D: So, you were in college and you knew you were going to apply?

K: Yes.

D: Yes. Okay. What was your family's reaction to your decision once you made it?

K: They would have preferred that I'd gone to medical school because most of the professionals in my family are physicians and I'm not sure that, I think they bought into the popular lack of respect for attorneys a little bit but as far as interfering with my being a professional, no, they expected me to be a professional.

D: Okay. Did you have any problems when you applied for law school? Did you encounter any problems with the administration?

K: Because I was a woman?

D: For any reason.

K: Well, I applied in Arizona and wasn't a resident so I didn't get in, in

D. Kanof

Arizona. But, no, basically I didn't. I wanted to go the the University of Houston Law School and I got in.

D: So you went where you wanted to go.

K: Yeah.

D: Was there a quota system when you applied?

K: No.

D: Was there scholarship money available for women when you applied?

K: Um, I believe that there probably was. I didn't apply for a scholarship. [For] a resident of the state of Texas, it wasn't that expensive and probably because of my father's income I would not have qualified anyway and since my parents could afford to send me to law school, I didn't believe in applying for a scholarship and taking money from somebody who needed it.

D: Okay, so you think probably there was money.

K: Yes. I think that the money that was available was just as available to women as it was to men.

D: Okay. How did male students react to women students in law school?

K: I was in the first law school class at the University of Houston that had a lot of women in it. The class preceding me was still a very small percentage but my law school class was almost a third [1/3] female. Most of the smartest students in my class were female and I don't recall negative reaction although the majority of my study group was female so I guess I just didn't expose myself that much or didn't recognize discrimination that much at the time.

D: Okay, so neither encouraging or discouraging.

K: No overtly, okay.

D: All right. How about professors? When you were asked to stand up and

D. Kanof

recite, did professors single out women for particular questions on particular cases or did they call on men more often?

K: I don't remember them singling out women or badgering women any more than men or maintaining a sexist line by say, calling on women for a family case versus...if that's what you're asking, I don't recall that. There were very few female law professors, however.

D: How many do you remember?

K: I remember two in the entire law school.

D: Do you feel that men and women were graded with equal fairness?

K: The grading was so secret that I wouldn't know. But like I said, most of the top students in our class were female.

D: Do you know what percentage?

K: No, I don't. The one time that I recall discrimination on my part, personal discrimination, and I think it had a lot to do with my being female, there was a moot court competition at the University of Houston for freshmen called the John Black Memorial Moot Court Competition. All freshmen had to do at least one round of moot court in that competition and then if they didn't want to proceed they didn't have to. It was single elimination and it was not partnered moot court. Moot court is like practice court and it's competitive. It was single elimination so the minute you lost you were out, and there were about a thousand in my class, in the freshman class. I went the competition route and each round had three judges. I never won a round 3-0. I won every one of my rounds--I was the first female to win the John Black Moot Court Memorial Competition--but I got a 2-1 decision in every instance, even if I was far superior and I don't remember ever competing against a female. Maybe once real early in the competition were there females. Most of the

D. Kanof

winners were males and the final was in an auditorium against a male who was one of the, you know, stars of the law school and he, already as a freshman, was being courted by the big firms in Houston, you know. He, as a matter of fact, got offers from Fulbright, Jaworsky, and _____ eventually. The panel of judges in that instance were two males and one female and I was relieved that they asked a female because I had a lot of fear because of the problems that I had that I might not win just for that reason and as it turns out, it was again a 2-1 decision. The losing decision being from the moot court coach who I'd always felt did not like me because I was a female and never put me on a team even though I won this competition and...I'd forgotten about this.

D: I love it.

K: My ex-husband at that time...when I was a freshman we hadn't got married yet. We got married when I was a second year law student. He transferred to my law school...we tried to do moot court together after that time and although I was as good if not better than he was, they were willing to take him onto a moot court team but not me. I really had forgotten about that. But when I won the competition I felt very strongly that the one attorney who voted against me who was from Fulbright and Jaworsky, who was a very much chauvinist or anti-feminist, and that the reason I did not win was because I was female. Because the overwhelming majority of the audience said it was very clear, including the [wife of the man who lost] who was anchorwoman for the local ABC station, who watched and very objectively said, "You were superior to my husband." So even, you know, she who would have been the most biased individual, was very clear about the fact that she thought I'd done a better job so I think there was some discrimination. I hadn't...I wasn't

D. Kanof

maybe that... My consciousness wasn't raised to the extent that I was looking for discrimination because I was raised in a family where women were professionals, although my mother is not, and also because I had not felt discrimination as a female personally, to that point. So maybe I just wasn't as aware as I should have been.

D: But you recognize it today?

K: Yes. Other women complained of it. I had a lot black friends in law school and more of the complaints were against the minorities, the blacks and the Hispanics, than against women because by that time there were so many women there.

D: Okay. Let's see, did I already ask you this question? Did I ask you about the unnecessary road blocks?

K: No.

D: I've just done three before you. Did anybody put unnecessary road blocks in your path, whether it be a friend, a family member, a professor, a counselor?

K: Can you give me an example of what you're asking?

D: Well, say for example you're talking in your study group and are talking about what field you might practice in later, did anybody discourage you from any particular field of study?

K: No. We'll get to after law school. When I was looking for jobs I was discouraged from certain fields.

D: All right. But in law school?

K: But in law school I don't believe so.

D: Never discouraged from practicing courtroom law?

K: Other than the moot court example... I guess [there] was maybe an underlying feeling all the time that females are not courtroom attorneys.

D. Kanof

I graduated from law school in '78, but when I was in law school, my law school didn't have a lot of practicum. They didn't have a lot of clinical courses where you could practice courtroom procedure and that kind of stuff so it wouldn't have been as evident.

D: So when you graduated from law school then, what jobs did you apply for? What did you get?

K: I couldn't get a job. I was living in Houston. I had graduated in the top half of my law school class, had a lot of the moot court stuff and some other good stuff on my resume that would have made me particularly attractive to certain kinds of firms and I never got...well, that's not true. I got a job out of law school with a small firm and I quit that job after six months because I felt like the attorney that I was working for was unethical and I'm real sensitive to that and I just couldn't stand it. I could not tolerate what I thought might be going on so I quit that job, but other than that, I couldn't get a decent job.

Now, at the time I did not attribute it to the fact that I was a woman because I saw other women getting jobs, although I do think that that was a big ..., a factor. I attributed it to the fact that I was overweight. I was quite a bit more obese than I am now and I feel that discrimination against obesity is an unspoken discrimination that people don't yell and scream about a lot but I think it very definitely is an impediment for a lot individuals. I've read a lot of articles about how people feel, that obese people are stupid, fat, lazy, you know, kind of stuff and I think that combined with my being a female. It's more socially acceptable for a male to be overweight than it is a female and my husband, ex-husband, was also quite a bit overweight at that time, [and he] got more job offers than I did or better job offers, although he

D. Kanof

didn't work either because it was a bit difficult for him to find a job but I think that had to do with attitude more than anything. So while I chose to attribute it to my size and physical appearance, in reality it probably had a lot to do with my being a female so I took a job as an attorney but really as a paralegal at a major oil company in Houston. It was below what I...it paid well, but it certainly wasn't anything that I wanted to do. It was a necessary kind of thing and my ex-husband was not happy with what he was doing so I got him a job there quite a bit later as well, and it was emotionally healthy because it was a very easy, kind of nondemanding. We were answering subpoenas. We were looking through confidential, super-privileged material, answering subpoena _____
_____ to present certain sensitive material to the Federal Trade Commission.

[PAUSE]

D: Yeah, I think we've got it. I can see the voltage.

K: Did you put it back to where we were?

D: Yeah, we're okay. If we're not, I'll die. I'll have to call you for some clarification. Let's back track a little bit when we're talking about how you couldn't get a job at first. Were you ever granted an interview? Did you go on a lot of interviews?

K: Yes, I was going out to interviews. It was interesting because my parents live here and I wanted to come back to El Paso. I sent out almost 200 applications. I applied to every firm and private practitioner and entity that had attorneys as employees in El Paso. I was granted 10 interviews and got no jobs and that's where I think the most interesting discrimination story comes in. I interviewed with an attorney here in El Paso who was a criminal law defense attorney and did

D. Kanof

a lot of other work but his primary practice was criminal law. And I went into his office and he sat me down. He was looking for an associate and I told him that I wanted to practice criminal law and he told me that the criminal courtroom was no place for a woman, that those assistant D. A.s were all males and that in order to keep up with them and to win a case and be successful you had to be able to duke it out in the trenches in the courtroom as well as out of the courtroom and that a woman could not do that. However, he did think that women made good family law attorneys. I mean I like family law and I wanted to practice family law as well. That's no problem. But what he was saying and the words he was using, in other words, you know it [was] kind of a professional barefoot and pregnant in the kitchen. Women are okay for family law but the cannot be criminal defense attorneys and the funny part about this was, I couldn't get a job in El Paso when I got out of law school. This was in '78, in March of '78 when I interviewed. At that time there were six female attorneys listed in the phone book in El Paso. This was just six years ago.

[Interruption]

So, the funny part of the story is that after we left Corpus Christi we came back to El Paso because my husband got a job with the City Attorney's Office here in El Paso and I got a job here within three weeks of coming back. It was really exciting. Things started to turn around for me and I always used to say if somebody would just give me a chance.

D: You could do it.

K: Yes, I could show them. But I became an assistant county attorney and for a while I was the legal advisor for the juvenile court diversion programs in El Paso, the First Offender Program, the Status Offender

D. Kanof

Program. Then, you know, I did shine and got grabbed immediately into the County Attorney's Office downtown and became a prosecutor. I did misdemeanors and then I did juvenile misdemeanors and felonies. Well, when I was a misdemeanor prosecutor in one of the county courts of law, one time this defense attorney walked in with a case and I am sure he didn't remember me but I sure remembered him and, yes, I beat him. I won the case. Never said a word to him, just the satisfaction of being in a criminal case. It was a DWI and just the satisfaction of defeating him with wits after his comments and he subsequently did not practice law in El Paso anymore. I became an assistant D.A. after two years in the County Attorney's Office and since I've been in El Paso I have not had problems getting promoted or being employed because I'm a woman.

D: Okay. Do you feel that you're well on your way to reaching a personal goal?

K: Yes, I do.

D: Do you consider that you've been successful? I mean do you feel like you've been successful so far?

K: Yes.

D: Are you a competitive person, socially, politically?

K: Yes, very.

D: Do you have any political aspirations?

K: Yes, I do. It, I never looked at it as a political aspiration. I was very naive politically when I came back to El Paso, very, very naive and probably still I am and I never knew it was a political aspiration but inasmuch as I've always wanted to be a lawyer I've also always wanted to be a judge. And I hope to be a district court judge.

D: Wonderful. Do you feel like you've accomplished anything for your sex,

D. Kanof

for women? (telephone rings)

K: Have I accomplished anything for my sex?

D: For women. Right.

K: I don't know. I really don't. I have a predecessor. You just interviewed her, Carol Pennock. I think she paved the way for me. Because I have the same job that she has, I'm afraid that they view this job, the chief of the rape and child abuse unit, as a job for a woman and I don't think that's accurate at all. I think it's accidental and coincidental that the two people who have succeeded the most in this position have been female. I don't think it has anything to do with our sex. There are certainly other attorneys who are just as concerned about this and just as interested who are men. Just like there's male social workers that are very involved in this and Carol just happened to be in the right place at the right time and I happened to have a preconceived interest in rape and child abuse. I was a rape crisis volunteer counselor which got me this job. So it doesn't have anything to do with being female but I think people view the fact that because, you know, we are females in this position that it's got to be a woman and it doesn't. As a matter of fact, the unit has two people in it and it always works best with one male and one female.

D: Okay. Talking about your experiences in the courtroom, do you feel that you're treated fairly by lawyers and judges?

K: Fairly is not a word that I would respond to because "fair" in my mind has to do with legals and judges being fair. Sometimes yes and sometimes no. Let me deal with judges first. There are some very good judges in this community who I think I have a special view of this because I not only see how judges relate to me as a female attorney, I see how judges

D. Kanof

relate to females as witnesses and as clients because most of my witnesses and my clients so to speak--victims--are female. There are some judges that are very sexist to the extent of being fatherly and overprotective, which is not necessary. And there are judges who are completely fair and attempt to view the crime or view women as they are. And there are some bad judges who are sexist who have made it known that they are sexist by comments that they have made or by their track record. So sometimes I am treated fairly and sometimes I'm not. There is that insidious type of discrimination that you have to deal with and I think it's worse in El Paso than anywhere else. They still get away with "sweetie," "honey," and "baby." I have had judges come on to me sexually. I have and I am too stupid to recognize that that's pressure and that if I don't respond, I'm going to get hurt in the courtroom which I have...for refusing. Well, it wasn't for refusing. It was for talking about the fact that he came on to me and so there are problems and yes, I have felt it.

As far as the attorneys are concerned, yes. If a man is a good prosecutor and a tough prosecutor and a fair prosecutor, than they are a good, tough, fair prosecutor. If a woman is, she is a castrating bitch, and that's what I am. I now recognize I should be proud of [that] because it's a compliment. I had a male attorney say to me today, "I've heard some really bad things about you so I know you're doing a good job." And I said, "Oh really? What have you heard?" And he said, "Oh, you know, that you're tough and you don't give on your cases and you know stuff like that." I said, "Yeah, that I'm a bitch." He goes, "Yeah," and he said, "Well, that's a compliment. I know you're doing a good job." And there is a very distinct double standard.

D. Kanof

When I first came into this office, I suffered tremendously because I was female. I was only the second female to come into this office. I came from the County Attorney's where there were not only a lot of women, it was also very loose and free-associating and it was kind of...you know, you could be friends with defense attorneys and there wasn't any kind of standard that was set that dealt with staying your distance from people. The first seven months that I was in this office no one spoke to me except the other female in the office. The stories that went around the office were that I only got my job because I was a lesbian lover of the other female, which couldn't have been further from the truth. I didn't even know her very well when I came into the office. I got hired because I was recognized as a good prosecutor. In the County Attorney's Office I had felony experience and I had experience with rape victims and that's why I was offered the job. But all kinds of ugly things went around. I had been fairly recently divorced when I came in and my ex-husband had left this office by request of this office and so it was viewed that it was a man being pushed out for a woman, which it was not. I did suffer tremendously. It was very lonely. It was very difficult. I'm a very social person and I went from having a social life as part of the job to having absolutely no social life and being ostracized. That continues to some degree today. Now it's more a kind of a standoffishness because of my success and reputation. Those people that perpetuated those myths are gone but they have left a legacy and although we have a lot more women in this office now--and I do have to commend Steve Simmons for hiring women because he recognizes they're his best workers. No fool is he.--I still kind of carry the legacy of the old guard and am kept at a distance I think more than the other females

D. Kanof

that are below me. So I do think I was the leader and I made inroads and I blazed the way for other women to be treated as equals in the office but I am not treated as an equal socially, only professionally to some extent.

D: Okay. Do you view marriage and a career as a viable combination?

K: Yes, I do. The only good thing about my marriage was that we were both lawyers. (Chuckles) Well, not the only good thing but it was one of the things that was not a problem the ways that we were. Oddly enough, you know, lawyers have this thing, because society looks down on them. I think that lawyers have inferiority complexes. I really do because you hear most lawyers say, "Well, most of my friends aren't lawyers. I wouldn't have lawyers as friends." And I want to say, "But wait a minute, you're a lawyer. You don't want other people to have you as a friend?" I think that we are afraid of ourselves because we have such a bad reputation ever since Watergate. I went into the profession with a Perry Mason fantasy thinking everybody was going to respect me and love me and was rudely awakened in law school that there was lots of disrespect for attorneys and they hated you and it was inherently suspicious. I have a very good friend that I just started becoming friends with and the relationship was very difficult to get off the ground because he was taught by his grandmother that lawyers were cheats and would get every penny that you owned and never do you any good and I'm still having trouble, you know, getting past the image of what I am rather than who I am, with a friend. But I think that lawyers look at themselves more critically even than other people do and are very sensitive about having this bad reputation and so they demean themselves. They think, "Oh, the worst person I could marry would be another

D. Kanof

lawyer," and I think that's wrong. The few lawyer-lawyer couples that I know are some of the better marriages that I know of and I think that would go with any professional. I don't know if you're going to ask me any questions about how being a woman professional affects my private life but I kind of think that's real interesting, too. I'll wait til you get there.

D: That's a wonderful question. Why don't we get started.

K: It's real difficult.

D: You think?

K: Uh huh. El Paso has such a low economic scale that I probably make more money than most men that would be in my age group and my dating group. I'm very aggressive. I don't play the game. I cannot play that dumb blonde game. You know, I don't think I'm the most intelligent person in the world but I think it shows through and I don't want to not talk about interesting political and social issues. I think that's a part of life, that kind of interchange, and I think I'm very, very,...or I've been told I'm very...intimidating. So I think it inhibits and my brother keeps telling me, "Not true. Just keep losing weight and they'll pound your door down." But it's an inhibiting factor and other than some other female professionals and some female accountant friends--I can't just say lawyers but other female professionals who don't want to be married and enjoy...I enjoy my life, I'm not saying that I don't. I cannot shake the fact that I think it is part of life and of being a woman to be sharing it with a man and to have children and I do want that. I think I can have it without it getting in the way of my career because I've seen it in my family and seen other females succeed professionally and have families. I think it can be improved on but I think I have the capacity

D. Kanof

of doing that, as well. That's one of the reasons I think being a judge--I never thought about this; this is new--but I think being a judge would be primo for a female because it's a more regulated life.

D: More comfortable.

K: Yeah. I do not think I would be as successful as I am right now if I had been married, going through the job that I have right now. I think I have had the opportunity to do a lot more. I do speaking engagements every week at night as well as during the day. I've talked nationally. I'm teaching in Dallas this week because I have some expertise in child sexual assault and rape and I don't think I would have had the time or the opportunity to have educated myself and gone to the workshops I've gone to and spent the time giving back to the community if I were married. There would have been demands that would have had to have been met that would have impeded my progress. So I consider myself lucky that at the time that this job presented itself to me, which is something I always wanted, that I was free and could give it everything.

D: All right. Are you a member of the Women's Bar Association?

K: I'm president of the Women's Bar Association.

D: Oh! That's wonderful. What is your reaction to the Women's Bar Association?

K: I'm very disenchanted with our Women's Bar Association. I don't think I've been that good of a president, but I cannot blame it completely on myself. Our women want it to be a social organization and I've watched this not only through my tenure which is almost up but also through the tenures of three preceding presidents, that no matter how hard you try to make it into a professional organization that provides services to the community, unless it's just something really outstanding and female

D. Kanof

oriented and social oriented, they don't bite. They want it to be social. Women that I think would be the most progressive, that are in caucus [the Women's Political Caucus] that are active in the Democratic Party, the women in Women's Bar that I would think would be most likely to want to use that organization as a quasi-political, feminist organization are the ones that just want to socialize at Women's Bar and after a month or two of really recognizing that, you just give up. One of the officers of Women's Bar has only been to one meeting in a year and that's an officer. So the women are apathetic and this is what they want it to be.

It was a bad year for me to be president because I was so involved in my job. I didn't have the time to really push and try to make women do what I wanted them to do. But it probably would have been for naught anyway. They come to the Christmas party; they come to an occasional luncheon meeting, if you have an interesting speaker; and other than that, they don't want to do much else except for donate money to the shelter for battered women, which is great. You know, I don't think that...I think that is part of our function but basically, other than that, the female attorneys, sometimes I think, are afraid that if they get too involved as feminists or as women, not even as political feminists but as women speaking as a group, that they will not be able to function with the men that they have to work on because basically the numbers of female attorneys in El Paso are very low in percentage of the numbers of the males.

D: 10 percent.

K: Yeah and that 10 percent is brand new. Like I said, [the number of] male attorneys has not escalated that much over the past four years but when I

interviewed in '78 there were six females in the phone book. So, I felt like I was fighting a losing battle and I talked to many men about whether or not they respect the female attorneys in town and of course you get some very sexist analysis. I personally believe that women are more conscientious attorneys and more ethical, from what I have seen. And the president of the El Paso Bar Association last year, Royal Furgeson, publicly made that statement. He agreed that by and large the female attorneys in this community are more professional and do work harder and I think that's because women have always had to work harder to get to the same place.

D: Okay, speaking of the El Paso Bar Association, are you also a member of it?

K: Yes, and I'm on the Board of Directors but it's ex officio because I'm president of the Women's Bar.

D: Okay. What, what is your reaction to the annual Bar banquet?

K: You're asking the right person. The Bar banquet problem always existed but it escalated when I came back to El Paso. The first Bar banquet I went to was...obviously you've spoken to women who've told you all about this. It wasn't the one where they had the stripper. That's not the first one I went to. It was the next one that I went to where they had the male stripper, okay, the reverse kind of stuff. It was horrible. They said very ugly things and my best friend is a female attorney--we've known each other since high school but it just so turns out that we're both attorneys--she walked out and was very disappointed in me for not walking out. So, I was one of the ones that got involved in trying to write the skit. And the next year Women's Bar was not permitted to participate as a group but what they said to us was, "If you don't like

it, you write something better." So a committee of women in the Women's Bar got together and met like on Sundays and stuff and wrote some really funny material. I'm trying to be objective about how funny that material is. I wrote the script for my senior follies when I was in high school so I kind of knew what to do. Nothing that we submitted was accepted and that year was even worse, I understand. I didn't go that year because I couldn't go.

This was not last year but the year before, but I couldn't go but I know that I was partially the brunt of it because I got back by word of mouth. They only talked about three or four women and the women that are most obvious are the ones that are in the courtroom. There's a very few courtroom females in El Paso. There are very few that go to trial. But the females that they spoke about had nothing to do with their expertise as lawyers. I mean you could make fun of that easily. It had to do with their anatomy or their sexual preference or something like that and I remember somebody told me that--and I kind of thought it was funny because I've always been teased about this--the one on me was not as bad as some of the others. One of the ones they did on me, they were talking about renaming movies and instead of E. T. it was B. T.--Big Tits--because I'm large chested. Okay, which is kind of cute and I didn't mind that so much as some of the other things they said about some of the other attorneys. For example, Janet Reusch, the magistrate, subsequently said, "Why couldn't they make fun of some...certainly I make gas on the bench that they could make fun of, but instead it was very ugly sexual things."

So we got mad and the Women's Bar demanded to become part of the committee that wrote the bar skit. It was hotly contested in El Paso Bar

and failed on vote the first time because the board of directors was predominantly male. We thought we had Mexican-American Bar and Young Lawyers behind it. It was the Young Lawyers that always had the responsibility for it. It was very heartily fought by my predecessor, Chris Kelso, and finally, finally we won. We became part of it and then the Bar skit that we did this past year, was not sexist and wasn't all that good either because most of the talent, the real funny people, refused to write. What they did was they said, you know, "We're going to take our ball and go home." And I am now the co-chair of the committee of the bar skit for this coming year and you know, it was kind of like, "Well, you opened your mouth, you get to do it." I don't have any idea of what it's going to be like but I think people are pretty fed up and maybe the day of making fun of people is gone, too. Maybe that's something we have to consider eliminating and maybe have some other kind of entertainment. You know, it's a great idea, but the Bar is getting so big that the jokes are inside and only a few people are going to understand them anymore anyway. I don't think the answer to the sexist bar skit is to say sexist things about men, which is what a lot of people wanted to do. They wanted to overreact and say really ugly sexist things about men and that would make it okay and it doesn't make it okay. Just like, you know, the bar banquet had problems with saying some pretty ugly things about Mexicans and Mexican attorneys and judges and we didn't approve of that. That's why we felt we'd have Mexican-American Bar support of the Board of Directors and at first [we] did not.

D: That's really all I have. One other thing I'd just like to have you comment on and then you can make some comments of your own, is when you came to El Paso attitudes were one way. What are they like now? Have

they changed or anything in your view?

K: The rich get richer and the poor get poorer. I think that some people's attitudes have changed but not very much. Some men have been forced to recognize that females are as good of attorneys because they lose in court. It's that simple. If I'm winning most of my cases--I've never tried a rape or child abuse case against a female--so if I'm winning 95 percent of my cases, that means 95 percent that are defending them are men and they are losing. So they are forced to respect--not to respect because you can't force anybody to respect somebody--but they are forced to recognize that women have to be reckoned with.

On the other hand, there is a lot of resentment for female success and there are women who, you know, in our legal community who perpetuate some of the myths and anytime there's one that is falling down, they're going to be held up as the example as you see all women are. We're just like, or they're just like we said they were going to be. So it's really unfortunate if we have perhaps one woman who is like maybe 50 men, they're going to be held up as an example and women are going to be demeaned in general as being unethical or double-dealing or lazy or incompetent, where if you have 50 men, they don't hold them up and say, "All men are," they just say, "This one guy is lazy or incompetent or, you know, no-good," whatever. So anything that a woman does reflects on the entire female bar while anything that a man does, does not.

The only time I saw Women's Bar really get together was when Judge Paxon would not let Carol try that rape case and we had women even in that that were fighting it. I don't know if anybody has discussed that with you or not but basically--Carol may have discussed it with you--I was secretary of the Women's Bar at that time, but was given the task to

issue the press release that said that Women's Bar requested that Judge Paxon recognize the appropriate channels in deciding whether a jury would be prejudiced. It was the only time the Women's Bar has ever stuck together and they didn't [altogether]. There were women that did not want us to issue that press release. It caused a schism in the organization and there were threatening phone calls to Carol that were, "if you go ahead with this, you'll be sorry." And she has been since that time. Women have to be a lot more careful about what they do. They're, you know, I don't know whether Carol discussed some of the legal problems she has had but she has to respond for having done things as a prosecutor--and because it's an ongoing case I have to be nebulous about this--that many male prosecutors before her have done and never been questioned. But it is because she is a female that, you know, she is subject to having to spend lots of money responding to some very ugly accusations and claims.

I myself was kicked out of a court for a year for standing up to a judge for something he had done in a child rape case that had begun with Carol and continued with me. I wasn't even that involved in the case but I did stand up to him and was kicked out of the court for a year. I didn't recognize myself as being kicked out. Functionally, I didn't have any cases in that court so I didn't have to go in but he certainly wouldn't have stopped me by law but he let it be known to everybody else that he...instead of getting my license...he kicked me out and I know that had it been a male that had done that, that he would never have gone that far or caused those problems or kicked him out of the courtroom. So there are some problems that women do have in this community and I would be remiss if I said that there weren't, but that's not to say that there

aren't some men who are feminists and are supportive. There are a few, not a lot, but a few in this community.

D: Any other comments?

K: I don't know. Through what you have, the interviews that you had, do you think that this community is ready for women in higher positions?

D: I think it depends on the woman at this point, as far as my research has shown.

K: And what do you think that the woman needs to be in order to achieve the recognition? Do you think she needs to be a woman that can get along with men and play their game or do you think she needs to be...

D: I think from the research so far and some of my own personal bias, too, because that's hard to separate, I think that they need to be smart, they need to be assertive, not necessarily aggressive but assertive and they need to be articulate.

K: Well, you know, what's interesting is when I was in the County Attorney's Office and was prosecuting from the same courtroom I would get, say, opposite criticisms that I was too aggressive and therefore ineffective or that I was not aggressive enough. It's real interesting because, you know, depending on who you work with or, you know, it's who is going to say what at what time, but in this community people are still real offended by aggressive, outgoing... We now are into delineating aggressive from assertive and that they mean different things and that you don't confuse one with the other, that's sort of a real hip thing to be into right now but basically there isn't a lot of difference between being assertive and aggressive except sociologically, maybe. People do not draw that line. When you are being assertive, they are going to misunderstand that for aggressiveness. There is something else I just,

for you historical archives, I'd like to discuss and that is rape in this community. I do a lot of public speaking, educating people about what rape really is and rape is really not somebody that's torn and battered. Rape is usually committed by people who you know and for power and control and there usually isn't physical injury and real hard to get people to believe. I find that it's harder to get women to believe than it is men and coming from the point of view, it's not inconsistent with men being sexist, though, because what I find is any time I have more than three or four women on a jury I panic if I have acquaintance rape.

END OF INTERVIEW