Constance K. Putzel

February 23, 2014; March 2, 2014; March 16, 2014; March 30, 2014; August 10, 2014; August 17, 2014; August 24, 2014; September 7, 2014

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ORAL HISTORY

of

CONNIE PUTZEL

Interviewer: Natalie Rees

Dates of Interviews:

February 23, 2014
March 2, 2014
March 16, 2014
March 30, 2014
August 10, 2014
August 17, 2014
August 24, 2014
September 7, 2014
Ms. Rees: My name is Natalie H. Rees. I am taking the oral history of Constance K. Putzel whom I'll call Connie. This transcript is a combination of the transcripts of the first and fifth interviews conducted on February 23, 2014 and August 10, 2014, respectively, using the same set of questions for both interviews. We are sitting in Connie's home in Baltimore, Maryland. Connie, is there anything you would like to say before we get started?

Ms. Putzel: Before we begin the interview, I would like to say a few words. I feel privileged to take part in this Project. Like most individuals over the age of ninety, I would like to feel that my life has had meaning. For 28 years, my beloved grandson, Drew William Putzel, was the only legacy I needed. Suddenly, in May 2012, his wonderful, promising life was ended by a freak accident. I was devastated. In October 2013, a little more than a year after Drew's death, I was invited to participate in the Women Trailblazers in the Law Project. My life again had meaning.

Also, the beautiful letters of appreciation from clients, colleagues, associates, and audiences have reassured me that I have, in fact, made a difference. One of those experiences began in the early 1950s with my first divorce case after I left Legal Aid to go into private practice. I represented a woman with two young sons (Eugene and Dwight), married to a corporate executive who unfortunately was an alcoholic. After the divorce, we kept in touch with Christmas cards and an occasional note. She assured me that she was doing well at work, loved her apartment, and her sons were coming along nicely. (One son earned his doctorate degree and became a Professor of Neurology, Molecular Biology, and Pharmacology at Washington University School of Medicine and lectured worldwide.) Some years later, in 2001, I saw her obituary in the Baltimore Sun newspaper and I visited the funeral home where I met both
of the sons and their families. In an email dated August 29, 2001, her son, Dr. Eugene M. Johnson, Jr., stated: “I wanted to thank you again for stopping by to see my brother and me at my mother’s funeral. I am sure that my mother would have been very pleased that you came. She always spoke so highly and appreciatively of you and all you did to guide her through a difficult time. Dwight and I were not old enough at the time to understand, but now we can easily envision how much your efforts meant to her.” That email, together with others, have made memories that I treasure as part of my legacy.

I just wanted to tell Brooksley 1 and Linda 2 and the ABA Senior Lawyers Division how much the Women Trailblazers in the Law Project means to me. Thank you. And Natalie, we return to your questions.

Ms. Rees: All right. What is your full legal name?

Ms. Putzel: My full legal name is Constance Kellner Putzel. That’s K-E-L-N-E-R and P-U-T-Z-E-L. My name at birth was Constance Bernice Kellner. I married William L. Putzel on August 28, 1945. Shortly before our wedding, I received a letter dated August 7, 1945, addressed to me as, “Miss Constance B. Kellner, Dear Sir”, informing me that I had passed the Bar Exam. After the marriage, my father, my new husband, and I (Mother wasn’t part of that conversation) had a heated discussion and we finally agreed that I would use “Constance Kellner Putzel” as my legal name. That’s the name on my driver’s license and my checks.

Ms. Rees: Would you have chosen to keep your original name if you hadn’t received that letter from the Bar Examiners?

Ms. Putzel: No. I don’t think that really influenced the decision.

Ms. Rees: So you would have changed your last name to your married name?

Ms. Putzel: Oh, yes.

Ms. Rees: When and where were you born?

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1 Brooksley Born, Esq., Arnold & Porter, LLP, Washington, D.C.

2 Linda Ferren, Project Director, ABA Women Trailblazers in the Law Project, North Bethesda, Maryland.
Ms. Putzel: I was born at Hebrew Hospital\(^3\) in Baltimore City, Maryland on September 5, 1922. I am now 92 years old. I have my original baby book, a thin pink hardback entitled, “The Record of Our Baby Girl”, etched on the cover in gold. At the top of page 9 is a large circle with the caption, “First Picture”, but the frame is empty.

Ms. Rees: Were you an only child?

Ms. Putzel: Yes, I was.

Ms. Rees: But there is no baby picture?

Ms. Putzel: No. The other sections as to height, weight, first steps, and first words are carefully documented in my father’s elegant cursive script. In the next five pages, each page is marked “photograph” across the top, but there are only blank spaces. Kodak was in business in those days.

Ms. Rees: Do you know why there are no photographs in your baby book?

Ms. Putzel: Maybe I was an ugly baby. Maybe that is why I remained an only child. Maybe that is why I am still searching for my identity.

Ms. Rees: Do you have any photographs from your early childhood?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. I have a photograph taken on February 1, 1926 when I was almost 3½ years old. (See Figure #1.) I have another photograph of me with my parents when I was around 5 years old. (See Figure #2.)

Ms. Rees: Where did you live as a child?

Ms. Putzel: We lived at 3407 Woodbrook Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland. There were no zip codes in those days.

Ms. Rees: Where in Baltimore was your home?

Ms. Putzel: Like most Jewish families, we lived in Northwest Baltimore.

Ms. Rees: Describe the place where you lived as a child.

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\(^3\) Interviewer’s Note: The Hebrew Hospital Asylum, founded in 1866, was located on Broadway Street near the Johns Hopkins Hospital. It was re-named Sinai Hospital and was moved to its current site at 2401 W. Belvedere Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21215.
Ms. Putzel: It was a three-story walk-up with two apartments on each floor. They were called railroad apartments with a front porch, a living room at the front, a long hall with a closet on the left and a dining room on the right, two bedrooms on the right, a bathroom on the left, and a kitchen at the rear with a back porch. There was no air conditioning, so on hot nights we took our bedclothes and slept on the roof.

Ms. Rees: How long did you live on Woodbrook Avenue?

Ms. Putzel: Until I was 15 years old. We moved out of our apartment and into a single family home. I think my parents thought that if we lived in more impressive surroundings, I would get more impressive dates.

Ms. Rees: What was the address of your new home?

Ms. Putzel: 3408 Dennlyn Road, Baltimore, Maryland.

Ms. Rees: Where in Baltimore was your new home?

Ms. Putzel: Dennlyn Road was in Northwest Baltimore in the Ashburton neighborhood. We were among the first Jewish families to live in that area.

Ms. Rees: Tell me about your family origins. How far back can you go?

Ms. Putzel: When I was born, I had three living great-grandparents: my father's maternal grandfather and my mother's maternal grandparents.

My father's maternal grandfather was Lazarus Stummer who lived at the Hebrew Old Men's Home in East Baltimore, Maryland. My best information from the 1890 census is that he was born in Poland in 1835 and was a cigar maker. My parents took me to visit him from time to time, but I do not know that much about him.

My mother's maternal grandparents, Albert Henly and Bertha Isaacs Henly, lived in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Albert Henly was born in Paris, France in 1841 and died in Philadelphia in 1928. Bertha Isaacs was born in

4 Interviewer's Note: The Ashburton neighborhood in Northwest Baltimore City later became home to many prominent Maryland African-Americans.

5 Interviewer's Note: This is probably a reference to the Hebrew Friendly Inn and Aged Home established in 1891 in Baltimore City, Maryland.
Frankfurt, Germany in 1851 and died in 1922 in Philadelphia shortly after my birth. I recently found in my silverware drawer an embossed sterling silver ladle with an etching on the back that read, “1867 Henly 1917”, which would have been my maternal great-grandparents’ 50th anniversary. I have an acrostic that Albert Henly gave me on my fifth birthday. (See Figure #3.) It was handwritten on stationary from the Hotel Walton in Lebanon, Pennsylvania. He would have been 85 years old at the time. I also have a photograph of Albert and Bertha Henly sitting in a rolling chair on the boardwalk in Atlantic City, New Jersey (year unknown). (See Figure #4.)

My maternal grandparents were Hortense Henly Strauss and Harry Kaufman Strauss. Hortense Henly was born in Brooklyn, New York on January 25, 1869 and had one sister and one brother. Her sister married Grandpa Strauss’ brother and had one child. Her brother, Alfred Henly, married Myrtle Solomon. They had a daughter named Erma. Alfred died young. In 1989, I was contacted by Richard Schwarzstein, a corporate lawyer in California who had married Erma’s daughter. They in turn had a daughter who had married a Frenchman and was living in Paris. Richard Schwarzstein called me because he was researching his daughter’s roots back to Albert Henly.

Grandma Strauss was what was considered “stout”. She wore mostly black or black and white shapeless dresses with her platinum and diamond broach sitting on her ample bosom. Other than rocking in a dining room chair with me on her lap at age three or four, playing “baby”, I don’t remember her much. She had a sewing machine in her bedroom, but I only remember Aunt Ida using it. Aunt Ida also did most of the cooking. My recollection of Grandma Strauss is of her sitting on a high-back, black needlepoint chair in the living room overseeing everything.

Grandpa Strauss was my favorite relative. He was born in Germany in 1865 and came to America at age 14. He eventually brought his three brothers over. One brother married Aunt Rosie, my maternal grandmother’s sister. Grandpa Strauss lived in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania with my grandmother, my Aunt Ruth, my Aunt Ada, and my Uncle Al.

Grandpa Strauss was a successful builder until the Great Depression. I remember a half-finished house in Margate, a suburb of Atlantic City, New Jersey. In 1928, Grandpa Strauss served as the President of the Erie Building & Loan Association for which he was awarded a cut glass punch bowl that I still have on a stand in my house. He died on April 28, 1934 in Philadelphia.
Grandpa Strauss owned a hotel in Salem, New Jersey. I visited Salem, New Jersey several years ago and found that the hotel is gone, but there is a metal sign saying “Nelson House” prominently displayed on the brick building. (See Figure #5.) I have copies of two deeds, one to Harry K. Strauss and one to Hortense H. Strauss, worth a total of $7,100, subject to three mortgages. I remember my grandparents discussing monies that were due from someone in Salem, New Jersey named Charlie Smith, evidently, the leaseholder of the hotel.

My paternal grandparents were Max Kellner and Sadie Stummer Kellner. My paternal grandfather, Max Kellner, died before I was born. He was an alcoholic who committed suicide. I was told that my father, on the day of his Bar Mitzvah, was the one who found my paternal grandfather dead. I have heard conflicting stories as to whether Max hanged himself or drank lye.

My paternal grandmother, Sadie Stummer Kellner, was born on October 1, 1861 and died on July 23, 1951 in Baltimore City, Maryland. She lived at 2818 W. North Avenue, Baltimore City, Maryland with her daughter and her son-in-law, Roslyn and Eddie Stappler, and their two children, my cousins Muriel Stappler (two years older than I) and Larry Stappler (five years younger than I). Grandmother Kellner had one brother, August Stummer (known to me as “Uncle Gus”) and two sisters, my Aunt Carrie and my Aunt Bertha.

My cousin, Muriel Stappler, and I were close growing up. I spent weekends at my paternal grandmother’s house where we had Saturday night dinner after Aunt Ros went shopping at Lexington Market for ham (my family did not keep kosher), trimmings, and those wonderful Berger’s cookies. After dinner, Muriel taught me to dance to Hit Parade songs, how to smoke cigarettes, and how to watch the streetcar pass by with the handsome young man from the hardware store (whom Muriel had a crush on). In later years, Muriel married, moved out of town, and we drifted apart.

My cousin, Larry Stappler, served in the Korean War. Larry and I became close in later years after his sister, Muriel, died. My family and I have remained close with Larry and his family. (He often says he was raised by Grandma

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6 Interviewer’s Note: Lexington Market is an historic indoor market established in downtown Baltimore City, Maryland in 1782. Still in operation today, it is one of the longest-running indoor markets in the World.

7 Interviewer’s Note: Berger’s cookies are still made in a bakery established in Baltimore City, Maryland in 1835 by the Berger family who brought the recipe from Germany. The cookie is made of shortbread with a thick layer of chocolate frosting.
Kellner.) Larry graduated from the University of Maryland and went to work as a buyer for Hochschild Kohn, a major department store in Baltimore City. Larry’s father-in-law persuaded Larry to join him in a catering business. Larry married Beverly, a lovely, capable woman. Larry and Beverly eventually took over the catering business, expanded it, and were very successful. Larry and Beverly have two wonderful children and six grandchildren (two grandchildren are rock stars, two grandchildren are accountants, one grandchild is a security guard at the United States Supreme Court, and one granddaughter, Annie, is autistic. (In honor of Annie, Annie’s mother founded an organization called “Itineris” for the training, placement, and socializing of adults with autism.) Larry and his family have been unbelievably supportive of my family, especially after we lost my grandson, Drew.

Ms. Rees: Before we talk about your parents, were any of these relatives influential in your life?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. Uncle Gus married a woman named Molla. Aunt Molla and Uncle Gus lived across the hall from us at 3407 Woodbrook Avenue. They didn’t have any children and Aunt Molla became my mentor. She taught me to sew sufficiently to pass the course in Junior High School. Aunt Molla was a reader. She gave me books to read from the school reading list and from her library. She befriended me with chocolate milk, cookies, hot chocolate, or ice cream when I “ran away from home” (across the hall).

Ms. Rees: Why did you run away from home?

Ms. Putzel: The last time I ran away from home, I was 12 years old. My father had smacked me across the face. Aunt Molla confronted my father and told him he wasn’t ever to do that again because I was a woman now.

Ms. Rees: Talk about your parents.

Ms. Putzel: My parents, Corinne Strauss Kellner and William Stummer Kellner, married in September 1921. I have a photograph of my parents taken around 1935. (See Figure #6.)

My mother was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1890 and graduated high school. She was the middle of three sisters. My father first courted one of Corinne’s sisters, Ruth. After I was married, Aunt Ruth sent me copies of two

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8 Hochschild Kohn (also called Hochschild-Kohn or Hochschild’s) was a 20th century department store chain based in Maryland. A Sephardic Jewish peddler, Benjamin Levy, started the business in 1773. The Hochschild Kohn Company was founded in 1897 and went out of business in 1983.
letters my father had written to her in 1915. One read, in part, "... so I am at your
tender mercy and I plead with you to let me down easy". (Aunt Ruth married a
handsome young man, Morton Weyl, who died in the flu epidemic during World
War I. Aunt Ruth did not attend my parents’ wedding because she was still in
mourning. She never re-married.)

My father was born in East Baltimore, Maryland in 1891. He had a
certificate in accounting, which hung (for some unknown reason) in Uncle Eddie’s
bedroom on North Avenue (in Baltimore City). Since my father’s mother was a
widow, there was no money for him to go to college. My father was an athletic
and energetic man. I was told that he had a nervous breakdown, possibly as a
reaction to his father’s suicide. He worked in a jewelry store until I was five years
old and then he worked for himself as a jeweler. My father then worked for my
Uncle Eddie who had a fur business. Eventually, my father went to work for
William Ayares, a friend from the YMCA where they both wrestled. My father
stayed with Ayares Finance Company for the rest of his working years. When my
father retired, he was a senior vice president of a regional conglomerate.

Ms. Rees: Could you describe your parents’ personalities?

Ms. Putzel: My mother always had a negative personality, maybe because she
was my father’s second choice. Every comment she made was followed by, “if
nothing unforeseen happens”. My father was personable, friendly, and bright, but
he had a terrible temper. In the home, my father was authoritative and
domineering while my mother was weak and whiny. On Election Days, my father
would give my mother a list telling her how to vote. There was no physical
violence between my parents, but my father frequently made verbal put-downs of
my mother.

Ms. Rees: What was your relationship with your mother?

Ms. Putzel: Not good.

Ms. Rees: How so?

Ms. Putzel: In retrospect, we had very different values. She cooked and cleaned
and cooked and cleaned. She played bridge, bingo, and mahjong and she went
to Sisterhood\(^9\) meetings. My mother served on the Kitchen Committee of the
Sisterhood. She had very little time for me. On Saturdays, Mother took me

\(^9\) Interviewer’s Note: In Reform Jewish congregations, the women's volunteer organization is
called the “Sisterhood” and the men’s volunteer organization is called the “Brotherhood”.

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shopping with her to Hutzler's Department Store where we had lunch at the coffee shop counter. Occasionally, we had lunch in the Hutzler's tearoom. Sometimes, Mother left me in the toy department to watch a marionette show.

When my parents were searching for a new house, I sometimes went with them. The bedroom of one house we visited had ivory furniture with navy blue walls and I thought it was stunning. My bedroom furniture was painted ivory and I wanted my bedroom walls in the new house painted navy blue. My mother said, "No". We compromised on a medium blue, which I never liked.

Ms. Rees: What was her objection to the navy blue paint?

Ms. Putzel: I have no idea.

Ms. Rees: Did she drive a car?

Ms. Putzel: She had a driver’s license, but as far as I know she never drove.

Ms. Rees: Continue with the description of your relationship with your mother.

Ms. Putzel: Shortly after we moved into the new house, I was stretched out on the sofa in the sunroom reading Gone With The Wind. My mother called in, "Constance, what are you doing?" and I responded, "reading". She said, "You’re not doing anything. Come into the kitchen and set the table."

When I was in the 5th grade, I got the measles. I had to stay in bed with the shades drawn (in those days, you were not supposed to be exposed to light when you had the measles), so I couldn’t read. My mother came into the bedroom with a mask on and I asked her if she would stay and keep me company. She said, "Who's going to take care of me if I get sick?" and that was the end of that.

When I came home from school, my mother would ask me what I had learned that day, but we never actually discussed anything. If I asked her a question, she would say, "Go look it up". One time, I had a reading assignment in high school and there were no books in my house from the reading list. I don't know why I didn't go to the Pratt Library. Instead, I went across the hall to Aunt Molla and found Harold, The Last of the Saxon Kings, which was on the reading list. I read it.

10 Interviewer's Note: The Enoch Pratt Free Library is the free public library system of Baltimore City, Maryland founded in 1882 by philanthropist Enoch Pratt (1808 – 1896).
Ms. Rees: What was your relationship with your father?

Ms. Putzel: My relationship with my father was good as long as I did everything he wanted. My father was into physical fitness and tried (unsuccessfully) to get me involved in athletics. (His favorite move was to get me to “bend the crab”, meaning to do a backbend.)

Ms. Rees: How was your health during your early years?

Ms. Putzel: Around age 6, I had my tonsils removed and I started to wear eyeglasses. I also had two broken arms at the same time and caught the measles when I was in 5th grade (as I mentioned).

Ms. Rees: How did you break your arms?

Ms. Putzel: I don’t remember how I broke the first one. It might have been skipping rope. I’m not sure. I remember very little about my childhood, but I do remember breaking the other arm. I was walking down the street with a friend, kicking stones on our way to school. My left elbow was already in a cast. This time, I slipped and fell, throwing all my weight on my right wrist. I wound up with two splints on my right arm.

Ms. Rees: So both arms were out of commission at the same time

Ms. Putzel: Yes and then I got the measles.

Ms. Rees: What else do you remember about your health as a young child?

Ms. Putzel: I was nearly 12 years old when I got my period. Mother was not prepared for it. (She had a hysterectomy shortly after I was born.) I cried when I started to bleed. Mother folded up a bed sheet for me to use even though Kotex existed in those days. She had written away for a book called *Marjorie May’s Twelfth Birthday*, which arrived shortly after my first period. Years later, when I was 22 years old and about to get married, I learned the “facts of life” from my best friend, not my mother.

Ms. Rees: Did your family celebrate Jewish holidays?

Ms. Putzel: We were Reform Jews, but we lived in an Orthodox Jewish neighborhood. The Orthodox Jewish families said that we were “bad Jews”. I originally stayed home from school for one day when there was a Jewish holiday.
Because of the criticism from our Orthodox Jewish neighbors, I started staying home from school for two days when there was a Jewish holiday.

On Friday nights, we observed the beginning of the Sabbath by lighting candles, breaking bread, and sipping wine. On Saturday mornings, my mother used to take me to services. When my cousin went with me, we talked during the services, my mother shushed me the whole time, and I didn’t get a whole lot out of it. My father smoked cigars, but he didn’t smoke on the Sabbath or on Jewish holidays, which put him in a bad mood. He would start fights with my mother on the Sabbath and on Jewish holidays. I don’t have good memories of religious holidays.

Ms. Rees: Did other family members join your family for Jewish holidays?

Ms. Putzel: We used to visit some of my distant cousins to wish them a happy (Jewish) new year in the Fall.

Ms. Rees: Were your parents involved in any kind of political activities?

Ms. Putzel: Not that I know of. My father was a member of the Maryland State Guard during World War II, but I don’t think he was involved in any political activities.

Ms. Rees: What activities did you do as a family when you were a child?

Ms. Putzel: I often spent weekends with Aunt Molla and Uncle Gus. On Sundays, my father drove us to Washington, D.C. and other towns in Maryland, such as Hanover, Frederick, and Taneytown, to eat at upscale restaurants. My parents and I enjoyed going out to dinner at Baltimore restaurants, including Marconi’s (where we went on my birthday and I had an ice-cream éclair for dessert), the Southern Cafeteria, Horn & Horn Cafeteria, Haussner’s Restaurant, and Miller Brothers. My parents went to the theatre because my father had a customer who worked in the box office and gave them free tickets. My father was active in the Brotherhood and the Grand Juror’s Association.

Ms. Rees: What books did you read as a child?

11 Interviewer’s Note: Haussner’s Restaurant was opened in 1926 by William Henry Haussner and was a famous Baltimore restaurant for 73 years. The menu featured “old world” style food (predominantly German) and Baltimore’s finest crab cakes. The restaurant housed a large collection of fine art, which decorated the walls of the restaurant. When the restaurant closed in 1999, the art collection was auctioned by Sotheby’s in New York City and garnered $10 million.

12 See, fn. 9, supra.
Ms. Putzel: I remember *Honey Bunch* and *Grimm's Fairy Tales* (that I read through my father's Harvard's Classics). I read *Pride and Prejudice*. I remember a book my father had from World War I about "the rational sex life for men" that I don't think I was supposed to read. I don't remember anything about it.

Ms. Rees: Did you have any hobbies growing up?

Ms. Putzel: I don't remember any except stamp collecting.

Ms. Rees: What kinds of activities did you engage in as a young child?

Ms. Putzel: I remember that my mother won big dolls playing bingo in Atlantic City, New Jersey and that I played with the dolls on the front porch. I had a girlfriend named Myra Ander who lived across the alley and had a swimming pool, but she went to Atlantic City, New Jersey for the summers. I played with other girls in the neighborhood and occasionally with Benjy Silverman, who lived upstairs and was a year younger than me. My girlfriend, Doris Kaminsky, lived several blocks away and we skipped grades together in school. When I visited my Grandma in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, I played with the boys who lived next door, Billy and Harry Putzel. ("Billy" later became my husband.) I have a picture of me at age 2 or 3 with my friend, Billy. (See Figure #7.)

Ms. Rees: Did you go to summer camp?

Ms. Putzel: I went to a camp in Crystal Lake, New York. I went to Forest Acres Camp in Maine where I learned swimming, paddle canoe, and archery. When I was fourteen years old, my father changed my camp because Jane Ayares (my father's boss' daughter who was four years younger than I) changed camps.

Ms. Rees: Did your family go away on vacations?

Ms. Putzel: Mostly, we went to Atlantic City, New Jersey with our Philadelphia family. One summer, my cousin Muriel and I went to Camp Louise where I won a spelling bee. Muriel wanted to come home after one week because she said the camp had "cooties", so I came home, too. The only other trips my family took while I was in grade school were to visit family in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Ms. Rees: How would you describe your personality as a child?

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13 Interviewer's Note: Camp Louise is a Jewish girls' sleepover camp located in Western Maryland in the Catoctin Mountains. Camp Louise was founded by Lillie and Aaron Strauss in 1922 and is still in operation today.

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Ms. Putzel: It was evidently okay. I do remember when I was six years old being clumsy and falling down the stone steps in front of the building. After a few falls, my mother took me to an ophthalmologist who prescribed glasses. After I had my tonsils out at age 6, I began to eat and gained weight. I wore chubby dresses and glasses at an early age.

Ms. Rees: Did that affect your personality?

Ms. Putzel: It probably did because I was always the last person to be selected for a team.

Ms. Rees: Where did you go to grammar school?

Ms. Putzel: I went to P. S. 60.

Ms. Rees: Did you start in kindergarten?

Ms. Putzel: No. I didn’t go to pre-school or kindergarten. I don’t know whether they had kindergarten in those days. I played with the neighborhood kids before I started 1st grade.

Ms. Rees: How far was the school from where you lived and how did you get to and from school?

Ms. Putzel: The school was about one mile from my home and I walked both ways. For the first quarter mile, I walked through a Jewish neighborhood. Then I walked the rest of the way in a largely working class, non-Jewish neighborhood. Based on a test I took on the first day of school, I was placed in a higher class. There was a group of four of us who were skipped three times so that we finished the 6th grade at age 10.

Ms. Rees: Did you walk to school in bad weather?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. I put on my rubbers and walked.

Ms. Rees: Did your father have a car?

Ms. Putzel: Yes.

Ms. Rees: Did he ever give you a ride to school?
Ms. Putzel: I don’t remember that he ever did. Occasionally, the father of one of my neighborhood friends (who had a candy store downtown) would drive several of us to school on his way to work.

Ms. Rees: Was your grammar school co-ed?

Ms. Putzel: Yes.

Ms. Rees: Were your grammar school teachers all female?

Ms. Putzel: I don’t remember any male teachers.

Ms. Rees: So teaching grammar school was strictly a woman’s profession?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. I think it was. I don’t think I had a male teacher until I got to law school.

Ms. Rees: Who were your friends in grammar school?

Ms. Putzel: Because of skipping, my grammar school friends were two of the girls that I skipped with. One of the two girls, Doris Kaminsky, became a very, very close friend. She lived five blocks away from my house. I don’t remember that we spent much time at each other’s house, but we were very friendly in school and throughout the years. She had an illness in high school that cost her a term of school and she wound up behind me. I did keep up with her. She married a lawyer, lived in Alexandria, Virginia, and had four children. One time they were driving north and stopped in Baltimore to visit us. I caught up with her again in the 1990’s when her husband was honored by the American Bar Association for his pro bono activities.

Ms. Rees: How did that come about?

Ms. Putzel: I heard that the American Bar Association was honoring a man whose name sounded familiar. I checked with the ABA Senior Lawyers Division to see if it was Doris’ husband and I found out that it was him. I told the person who was in charge of the honors dinner and I was invited to sit at the head table with them. We had a very nice reunion. We subsequently visited them in Alexandria, Virginia.

Ms. Rees: What was the impact of gender on your early childhood?

Ms. Putzel: None that I can remember.
Ms. Rees: Did you experience sex discrimination or disparate treatment in your early childhood?

Ms. Putzel: Not that I can remember.

Ms. Rees: Were there any advantages to being female?

Ms. Putzel: I don't remember giving it a thought.

Ms. Rees: How old were you when you finished grammar school?

Ms. Putzel: I was 10½ years old when I started junior high school.

Ms. Rees: Where did you go to junior high school?

Ms. Putzel: I went to P.S. 49 for junior high school. I did the accelerated program and finished three years in two.

Ms. Rees: Did you have any male teachers in junior high school?

Ms. Putzel: They were all female except for a male gym teacher. He said to me, "Little Miss Kellner, you better go on a diet." Of course, a male teacher could not say something like that today.

Ms. Rees: So how old were you when you finished junior high school?

Ms. Putzel: I was 12½ years old.

Ms. Rees: What effect did being a younger person in a class of older children have on your maturity level?

Ms. Putzel: I think at age 12½, I started to be responsible for my own life.

Ms. Rees: In what way?

Ms. Putzel: I had never done a lot of homework in school. I got good marks without doing a lot of homework. When I started high school at age 12½, we were told that we were supposed to do 3 hours of homework each night. I did 3 hours of homework at the end of the semester, just before the final exam. I found out that there were other things in life that were more interesting than school.

Ms. Rees: Such as?
Ms. Putzel: Well, I wasn't dating men, although I had a date for my Senior Prom. I guess I was doing a lot of outside reading and shopping. I was fat and I wore glasses. I didn't do a lot of studying, so I don't know what I did with my time. I don't remember what teenagers did in those days before they began to date, but I don't think I was doing any significant amount of dating at 14 or 15. I had a nice clique of girlfriends who all lived about a mile in different directions from the school. I used to go down and play with them — not play with them, but visit with them and do whatever teenagers did and it was the beginning of me enjoying my life.

Ms: Rees: Where did you go to high school?

Ms. Putzel: I went to Western High School, an all-female public high school.

Ms. Rees: Was there an all-male public high school counterpart?

Ms. Putzel: Yes: There were two all-male public high schools, City College and Poly Technical. City College offered general high school courses and Poly Technical was oriented to engineering.

Ms. Rees: Where there joint activities between the all-female and all-male high schools?

Ms. Putzel: I don’t think so.

Ms. Rees: What impact do you think it had on you going to an all-female high school?

Ms. Putzel: I didn’t like it much.

Ms. Rees: Because...?

Ms. Putzel: Just didn’t like it very much. Didn’t like high school very much at all.

Ms. Rees: How were your grades in high school?


Ms. Rees: Did you have any part-time jobs while you were in high school?

Ms. Putzel: I don’t think so.
Ms. Rees: We’re looking at your high school yearbook. What kind of extracurricular activities did you get involved in?

Ms. Putzel: I was involved in Junior News, Latin Club, Math Club, Student League, Players Guild, Camera Club, and I played Squire Harcastle in the Senior Play, “She Stoops to Conquer”.

Ms. Rees: Were your high school teachers female?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. All female.

Ms. Rees: Do you remember any teachers who stood out?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. I had two teachers I really liked. One was Dr. Basett, the only teacher with a PhD., who made English History come alive. Another was Rosina Joseph, my English teacher, who evidently thought highly of me because she gave me a special assignment and a high grade. (Incidentally, Rosina Joseph had two brothers who were lawyers and who represented my father’s business in collections work. Many years later, I took over that representation.)

Ms. Rees: How old were you when you graduated from high school?

Ms. Putzel: I was 15 ½ years old when I graduated in February 1938. (See Figure #8.) I had been on the academic track in high school, so the semester after graduation I took classes in shorthand and typing. In the summer, I went to Strayer’s.

Ms. Rees: What was Strayer’s?

Ms. Putzel: It was a business school in downtown Baltimore. I’ve often thought that Father sent me to college to get educated and to Strayer’s to get marketable.

Ms. Rees: Did you have any aspirations as to what you would do after high school?

Ms. Putzel: Not really. I was ready to go to work and find out what the world was like. You had to be 16 years old to work, so I couldn’t get a job after high school.

Ms. Rees: What was your first job?

Ms. Putzel: My first job was at my father’s office during the summer after my first year of college.
Ms. Rees: Did you get paid?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. I was paid $8 a week and my father insisted that I bank it rather than spend it. When I got married 6 years later, there was $64 in the account. (I don't remember if interest had accrued on the account.) The $64 would have meant a lot to me in 1939, but it didn't mean that much to me in 1945. I think that was a mistake my father made, but I can forgive his autocracy because he had a lot of redeeming qualities.

Ms. Rees: Such as...?

Ms. Putzel: He encouraged me to read. He got the Reader's Digest and the Saturday Evening Post and I read both of those. He was very athletic and taught me some acrobatic stunts. He gave me an occasional compliment.

Ms. Rees: Did your mother have any redeeming qualities like your father did?

Ms. Putzel: If she did, I didn't appreciate them.

Ms. Rees: Was your mother overly critical of you?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. She thought criticism made you a better person. So she criticized me every chance she got.

Ms. Rees: Over what kinds of things?

Ms. Putzel: I remember her criticizing my school grades. If I got "A's", she would ask how many other people got "A's". If I got "B's", she would ask why I didn't get "A's".

Ms. Rees: But on the other hand, she didn't encourage you to read or to do homework...

Ms. Putzel: No.

Ms. Rees: What college did you attend?

Ms. Putzel: Goucher College in Towson, Maryland.14

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14 Interviewer's Note: Towson is 10 miles north of Baltimore City and is the county seat of Baltimore County. Goucher College was an all-female school until 1986. It was (and still is) the sister school of the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore City, Maryland.
Ms. Rees: Did you choose Goucher College?

Ms. Putzel: I didn't have a choice. I wanted to go to University of Maryland in College Park, Maryland (outside of Washington, D.C.) or to some other out-of-town co-ed school. My father wouldn't hear of it. I applied to (what was then) Towson State Teachers College, but I was wait-listed because of my mediocre high school grades. Father bet me that I couldn't get into Goucher College. Goucher had an entrance exam and didn't rely on high school grades, so I was accepted at Goucher.

Ms. Rees: Was this a test like the S.A.T.?

Ms. Putzel: Very much like the S.A.T.

Ms. Rees: So your academic career in high school didn't impact on your ability to get into college?

Ms. Putzel: It didn't impact on my ability to get into Goucher. So then I felt a little better about myself.

Ms. Rees: How old were you when you started college?

Ms. Putzel: I was about 10 days beyond my 16th birthday.

Ms. Rees: Did you have any loans, grants, or scholarships?

Ms. Putzel: No. My father paid the tuition. I think it was like $600 a year in those days.

Ms. Rees: Did you live at school?

Ms. Putzel: No. I stayed home. I took three streetcars to get to college.

Ms. Rees: What was your major in college?

Ms. Putzel: Physiology.

Ms. Rees: Why did you choose to major in Physiology?

Ms. Putzel: The story behind that choice is interesting. Shortly after I started at Strayer's, I had dinner with my parents at the old Oriole Cafeteria on North Avenue. The Cafeteria had a full-sized scale at the entrance of the cafeteria line.
I stepped on the scale and it screamed, "150 POUNDS" on my five foot, two inch frame. I said to myself, "unacceptable". Next day after class at Strayer's, I headed to the Read's drugstore at the corner. (This drugstore was later to become a civil rights landmark.) At the drugstore, I had a glass of buttermilk for lunch. I gradually began cutting down on more and more foods. By the end of my first year of college, I went from 150 pounds to 95 pounds.

Ms. Rees: What happened next?

Ms. Putzel: My mother took me to the doctor because I had stopped menstruating. I didn't know the word "anorexic" back then, but I was clearly anorexic. The doctor said I had a low basal metabolism and prescribed medication for thyroid problems. When I got home, my father took one look at the pills and said, "you will not take these pills, you will eat". I began to eat normally. By the end of the next year, I was back to 120 pounds where I stabilized and I began to menstruate again. I have remained within five pounds of that weight ever since.

Ms. Rees: How did that affect your choice of physiology as a major?

Ms. Putzel: I became fascinated with the diet and I thought I might become a nutritionist. This led to my majoring in physiology.

Ms. Rees: What kind of courses did you take in college?

Ms. Putzel: I studied bacteriology, comparative anatomy, and other core courses. I received excellent grades in my physiology course and I began to develop more confidence in myself. I began being closer to human.

Ms. Rees: How did you meet boys going to an all-female college?

Ms. Putzel: I met some at the Youth Group at Temple and I met others through other people.

Ms. Rees: What kinds of extracurricular activities were you involved with in college?

Ms. Putzel: I think I did something in the Drama Club. I also had some artistic ability. Although I took art classes, I was told I didn't have any talent. However, in my Senior year, I did a sketch – sort of a cartoon – and got a little bit of a write-up as "the artist of the week" in the Goucher College Weekly with the following words: "She likes to ride horseback because she can do that sitting down - she
likes to swim because she can do that lying down — and on the whole you have the basis for quite a personality”.

Ms. Rees: Did they perceive you as lazy?

Ms. Putzel: Possibly.

Ms. Rees: How did you do academically in college?


Ms. Rees: You said that your father arranged for you to go to college. How did your mother feel about you going to college?

Ms. Putzel: Oh, I think in her own way she was proud of me.

Ms. Rees: Did she tell you she was proud that you were going to college?

Ms. Putzel: No.

Ms. Rees: Do any of your college professors stand out as mentors?

Ms. Putzel: I liked my physiology professors. I also enjoyed two political science professors. I’ll never forget the comment made by one of them during the Roosevelt-Wilkie race when she suggested we should not vote for Wilkie to “make up for the privations of his youth”.

Ms. Rees: Were any male professors teaching at Goucher College?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. There was a male professor and a female professor who taught political science courses. I liked both of them. There was a male sociology professor I liked. I did not like my freshman advisor who wrote on my record that I lacked leadership skills. (I had just turned sixteen when I started college.) I learned about the comment years later when I had my Character Committee interview for bar admission. I also learned that she was anti-Semitic.

Ms. Rees: Were there any advantages or disadvantages to going to an all-female college?

Ms. Putzel: I made one good friend, Anita Kanner. I spent a lot of time at her house and met some wonderful people there that remained life-long friends. Anita’s father was a world famous child psychiatrist. He was a great punster and
one of his favorite comments was “happiness is having a disease named after you”. (He was the first to identify autism in children, which was named the “Kanner Syndrome”.) Anita majored in psychology and went on to be a social worker, I think.

Ms. Rees: Did the women who attended Goucher College have career goals?

Ms. Putzel: Probably not.

Ms. Rees: Were they planning on getting married?

Ms. Putzel: Perhaps.

Ms. Rees: So they weren't necessarily going to college to pursue a career goal?

Ms. Putzel: Correct.

Ms. Rees: How many women were in your graduating class?

Ms. Putzel: Not many, maybe a couple hundred.

Ms. Rees: Do you still know some of the women, besides Anita Kanner, who went to Goucher College with you?

Ms. Putzel: Oh yes. There was Virginia Lee Kremer (“Ginny”). Ginny was a couple years behind me at Goucher. She was a Chemistry major and wanted to be a doctor. She never went to medical school, but instead became a high school Chemistry teacher. Her daughter, Eleanor Taylor (“Ellie”), did become a doctor.

Ms. Rees: Why didn’t Ginny go to medical school?

Ms. Putzel: Oh, girls didn’t go to medical school in those days.

Ms. Rees: Or law school?

Ms. Putzel: No. Women didn’t go to law school or medical school in those days.

Ms. Rees: How old were you when you graduated from college?

Ms. Putzel: 19 years old.
Ms. Rees: Did you go to law school right after college?

Ms. Putzel: No, I got a job working as a lab assistant at the Johns Hopkins Hospital, School of Health and Mental Hygiene. That was considered a good job for a woman with a college degree.

Ms. Rees: Were you hired because of majoring in physiology?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. But when I got there, they had me making media and washing test tubes. I had two immediate superiors, two women with Master’s degrees who did simple experiments. The only one in the lab who did creative thinking and creative activity was the head of the lab, a man with a PhD. I stayed there for less than a year. We were working on the cocci: the meningococcus and the staphylococcus.

Ms. Rees: Were they deadly in those days?

Ms. Putzel: The staph infections weren’t, but the meningitis could be.

Ms. Rees: Did anyone in the lab get sick?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. One of my superiors got meningitis and I got a bad staph infection.

Ms. Rees: Did you test animals in the lab?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. We were inoculating chickens with the various cocci. When we were finished, we took the chickens home and cooked them to eat. We just assumed that cooking them would kill the germs.

Ms. Rees: Oh, how awful! Why did you leave the lab?

Ms. Putzel: I didn’t want to go on for my PhD. and I didn’t like the work enough to spend my life doing it.

End of Combined Interview #1 and Interview #5
Illustrations

Figure #1: CKP at almost 3 ½ years old taken February 1, 1926.
Figure #2: CKP and her parents, circa 1927.
Figure #3: Acrostic written by Albert Henly to CKP at age 5 in 1927.
Figure #4: Albert & Bertha Henly in a rolling chair on the Atlantic City boardwalk.
Figure #5: Sign on hotel.
Figure #6: CKP's parents, Corrine and William Kellner, circa 1935.
Figure #7: CKP & Billy Putzel as friends in Philadelphia in 1924.
Figure #8: CKP's high school graduation picture taken in 1938.
Ms. Rees: My name is Natalie H. Rees. I am taking the oral history of Constance K. Putzel. This transcript is a combination of the transcripts of the second and sixth interviews conducted on March 2, 2014 and August 17, 2014, respectively, using the same set of questions for both interviews. We are sitting in Connie’s home in Baltimore, Maryland. Connie, are there any corrections or additions to what we talked about last time?

Ms. Putzel: I would like to add more about my best friend at Goucher College, Anita Kanner. Anita was the youngest person in our class. She was fifteen years old when we started college. I had just turned sixteen years old and we got very friendly. We both were very fond of our fathers and weren’t very happy with our respective mothers. As a result of our friendship, our parents became friends. After I graduated college and started my first job at the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health and Mental Hygiene,¹ I carpooled to work with Anita’s father. Her father, Dr. Leo Kanner, was a child psychiatrist at the Johns Hopkins Hospital and the head of its child psychiatry department. Anita married and moved out of town. She and her husband worked for the Federal government until they lost their jobs due to the House Unamerican Activities Committee (HUAC) McCarthy purges in the 1950’s. Unfortunately, Anita died of cancer at age 42.

Ms. Rees: How did your friendship with Anita Kanner affect your life?

¹ Interviewer’s Note: The Johns Hopkins School of Public Health and Mental Hygiene was founded in 1916 with a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation. It was the first independent, degree-granting institution in the United States for research and training in public health. By 1922, Harvard, Yale, and Columbia had established Schools of Public Health based on the Johns Hopkins model. It was renamed the Bloomberg School of Public Health in 2001.
Ms. Putzel: I spent a lot of time at the Kanner home and met people who have since played a significant role in my life.

Ms. Rees: Whom did you meet in the Kanner home who was influential in your life?

Ms. Putzel: One person was Richard Sonnenfeld who became a close friend. He was born in Germany in 1923. As a teenager, he emigrated to the United States from Germany prior to the outbreak of World War II. He fought for the United States in World War II. Because of his fluency in the German language, he was recruited to work at the Nuremberg trials. Dick served at the Nuremberg trials as Chief Interpreter and Interrogator, a position just under Justice Jackson.

Ms. Rees: Was he an attorney?

Ms. Putzel: No. After the Nuremberg trials, he finished his degree in engineering at the Johns Hopkins University. He went to work for RCA and was part of the team that developed the first color television. He eventually became vice-president of RCA. Dick died a year or two ago.

Ms. Rees: How did he influence you in your career?

Ms. Putzel: I don't know that he influenced me in my career — we were very good friends. I made an effort to fix him up with one of my law school colleagues, but that didn’t work out very well. After we were both married, we socialized and he continued to be a wonderful, fascinating person in my life. He referred clients to me when I began practicing law. After Dick and his wife moved to New York, we saw them less frequently. But one Sunday in 2002, my son called to ask me if I knew Dick Sonnenfeld. I said, “Yes, why?” He referred me to a book review in that day’s newspaper about the book Witness to Nuremberg authored by Dick. My son bought a copy of the book, sent it to Dick, and Dick autographed it, “To Connie with love”. In the book, Dick refers to Anita Kanner. He says,

The Kanners had a daughter, Anita, two years older that me and they invited me to stay at their house on weekends ‘because I had no friends’. I soon realized that their daughter was socializing with a young man who was leaning far, far left. Though they must have realized that Anita and I would never be an item, they may have hoped that I might be able to wean her away from a flaming red with a college
I liked Anita, but I had no romantic interest in her.

Ms. Rees: Whom else did you meet in the Kanner home?

Ms. Putzel: I met Drs. Manfred and Carola Guttmacher and eventually met Jonas Rappeport who became a psychiatrist and my lifelong friend. As a teenager, Jonas used to babysit for the Guttmachers, who were frequent guests in the Kanner home. Jonas told me he used to browse through the Guttmachers' library while their children slept. Years later, after Jonas finished his medical training and became a psychiatrist, Dr. Manfred Guttmacher invited Jonas to sit in on meetings with world famous psychiatrists. Jonas' background is too extensive to dwell on here. Shortly after Dr. Guttmacher died, Jonas was appointed to succeed him as Chief Medical Officer of the Supreme Bench of Baltimore City.

Ms. Rees: How did Dr. Rappeport influence your career?

Ms. Putzel: Bill and I served with Jonas and his wife, Joan, on the Social Justice Committee of Temple Oheb Shalom. The group was committed to socializing with mixed racial groups. The four of us remained close friends until both Jonas and I lost our spouses. Jonas and I continue to be friends — I recently went to his 90th birthday party.

Jonas referred clients to me once I started practicing law. Also, Jonas was instrumental in inviting Bill to speak on a panel called, "The Legal Definition

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2 Interviewer's Note: According to Ms. Putzel, Anita Kanner married her "flaming red with a college education". After Anita Kanner's early death, Ms. Putzel had an opportunity to draft a Will for Anita Kanner's husband that initially contained a bequest to the Communist party.

3 Interviewer's Note: Dr. Manfred S. Guttmacher (1898–1966) was a forensic psychiatrist who served as the chief medical officer of the Supreme Bench of Baltimore City from 1930–1966. His identical twin brother, Dr. Allan F. Guttmacher, an obstetrician/gynecologist, was a pioneer in birth control, artificial insemination, and the legalization of abortion. Dr. Carola B. Guttmacher (now Eisenberg) is a psychiatrist who served on the faculty of the Johns Hopkins Medical School from 1958 to 1967. She went on to become the first woman to be Dean of Students at MIT. From 1978–1990, she was Dean of Student Affairs at Harvard Medical School.

4 Interviewer's Note: Dr. Jonas R. Rappeport was the founding father of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law. After doing extensive work in the field of forensic psychiatry, he succeeded Dr. Manfred S. Guttmacher in 1967 as the Chief Medical Officer of the Supreme Bench of Baltimore City (later re-named the Circuit Court for Baltimore City).
of Insanity” at a convention of the American Psychiatric Association held in Hawaii. I went along for the trip and enjoyed myself.

Jonas became the first president of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law, an organization he founded. I was invited to speak at an AAPL conference in Williamsburg, Virginia. My topic was, “Contract Marriage: a Prophylactic Approach to Divorce”. I have here a thank you letter from the Program Chairman that reads, in part, “I was asked on several occasions why we had not requested you lead one of the small group discussions on Friday afternoon or Saturday. (My response was that our contract with you did not include your permission to inflict the torture of prolonged group discussions while surrounded by the beauty of Williamsburg in the fall).”

Ms. Rees: How would you characterize the contacts you made through the Kanner family?

Ms. Putzel: It shows the value of networking. I have to admit that as a lawyer I consider myself a journeyman. I was good at what I did and I seized the opportunities when I had them, but I never had lofty ambitions.

Ms. Rees: Let's see. We left off last session with you cooking and eating chickens injected with cocci.

Ms. Putzel: Yes. I graduated from Goucher College in June 1942. I worked at the. Johns Hopkins School of Public Health and Hygiene from June 1942 until early 1943 when I decided to go to law school.

Ms. Rees: What made you decide to go to law school?

Ms. Putzel: At that time, my father was Senior Vice-President of a regional conglomerate in the business of finance. My father came home every night and sat at the dinner table complaining about government regulation and how frustrating it was for him. And I got to thinking about what he was saying and one night, for no good reason that I can recall, I told him I thought I'd like to go to law school. My father's face lit up and he said, “Sounds good to me.”

Ms. Rees: Was there an entrance exam, like the LSAT?

Ms. Putzel: There was no entrance exam at all.

Ms. Rees: Were you discouraged from applying to law school because you were a woman?
Ms. Putzel: Not at that time. It was World War II and there were very few men around to go to law school. In order to keep the law schools open, they needed all the credible applicants they could get. So, my mediocre Goucher College transcript was quite adequate.

Ms. Rees: How did you get enrolled in law school?

Ms. Putzel: The next day after I told my father I wanted to go to law school, I contacted the University of Maryland School of Law, asked for an application, received the application, and completed it. I made an appointment to go down to the law school, which then was a 3-story brick building at the corner of Redwood and Lombard Streets in downtown Baltimore City.

Ms. Rees: What happened at the appointment?

Ms. Putzel: I went there for what I thought was an interview. This was February 1943. The secretary invited me into her office and notified the Dean that I was there. The Dean opened his door and welcomed me into his office. We met for a short while and he said, “Well, it’s the second week in February. The semester has already begun, but why don’t you come with me?” He walked me up to the second floor and into a classroom — it had a blackboard in the front, a small platform, and two walnut tables on either side of the platform facing each other on the diagonal. The tables could uncomfortably seat 12 people. Ten seats were occupied, seven women and three men.

Ms. Rees: What happened next?

Ms. Putzel: The Dean opened the session with the words, “Good morning, gentlemen” as he continued to do every morning. It was a Constitutional Law class and I started law school right then.

Ms. Rees: Describe that first Constitutional Law class.

Ms. Putzel: My first class in Constitutional Law was different from any other class I had experienced. The casebook method provided the format; that is, the student was required to read a legal opinion in a casebook as homework. The Socratic teaching method rather than the lecture teaching method was utilized effectively in the small classes. This provided an opportunity for the student to argue both sides of any issue. She might argue for 10 or 15 minutes for the plaintiff, respond to questions, then switch and argue for the defendant. I found the Socratic teaching method fascinating.
Ms. Rees: You were in law school in 1943, 1944, and 1945. Describe your law school experience.

Ms. Putzel: In the day school, the classes averaged eight to ten people. School ran through the summer, day and night. There was no air conditioning and the summers are very hot and humid in Baltimore. The normal law school program is three years long, but I finished in two years from the day I enrolled. The faculty consisted of five or six law professors, some of them part-time. People who graduated before and after me were in my classes, depending on what was taught which semester.

Ms. Rees: Were there any female law professors?

Ms. Putzel: No. Not when I was in law school.

Ms. Rees: During the World War II years, what was the percentage of female law students?

Ms. Putzel: About half until the War was over.

Ms. Rees: Did you live at home or at the law school?

Ms. Putzel: I lived at home. There were no dorms for the law school.

Ms. Rees: How did you get to law school from your home?

Ms. Putzel: I had to take three streetcars each way.

Ms. Rees: Did you have a social life in law school?

Ms. Putzel: We had a good social life. We congregated in the lobby between classes. There were no afternoon classes so a group of us, men and women, walked from the school to the courthouse area where most of us had part-time jobs either clerking or searching titles. We would stop for lunch along the way. I maintained lifelong friendships with my law school classmates after graduation.

Ms. Rees: What subjects did you like best in law school?

Ms. Putzel: I liked most of them - hard to say. I liked Evidence and Admiralty because Judge Niles taught them and I thought he was a wonderful teacher. I liked Domestic Relations. I don’t think I particularly liked Torts or Real Property.
(The Real Property professor was the only one who lectured instead of using the Socratic teaching method.)

Ms. Rees: By the end of that first law school year, had your social or political philosophies changed?

Ms. Putzel: I don't believe I particularly had any. I don't think I was into politics at that time. Also, I wasn't old enough to vote when I started law school. You had to be 21 years old.

Ms. Rees: Did you have any goals or ideals in mind when you started law school?

Ms. Putzel: Not really. I was bored as a child and I wanted to be interested – I wanted something interesting to do.

Ms. Rees: And that was law school?

Ms. Putzel: That was law school; law school I found very interesting. I found the people interesting and I was challenged. For the first time in my life, I learned to study.

Ms. Rees: Did you experience any sex discrimination in law school?

Ms. Putzel: I don't remember any discrimination based on sex. There was religious discrimination – I remember when I inquired of my friends about the sorority activities they were discussing, I was told that the sorority did not accept Jews. I also remember a woman who was in a different law school class telling me, "In job interviews, don't admit you can type." That might have worked in 1943, but by the time I graduated in 1945, I was glad that I could type. (More about that later.)

Ms. Rees: Did you want to practice law after you graduated?

Ms. Putzel: I think I had an idea when I went to law school that I would get a government job. I think that is what I assumed because complaints about government regulations were what interested me in going to law school. I never thought about practicing law independently.

Ms. Rees: When did you graduate from law school?

Ms. Putzel: May 1945. (See Figure #9.)

NHR/ABA Trailblazers/Transcript #2/Last corrected 11/14/15
Ms. Rees: How many people were in your graduating class and where was the graduation ceremony held?

Ms. Putzel: There were two people in my graduating class, a Japanese-American man named Frank Chuman and me. The graduation ceremony took place in College Park, Maryland at the main campus of the University of Maryland.

Ms. Rees: Tell me about Frank Chuman.

Ms. Putzel: At the start of World War II, he was placed in a camp in California that housed “enemy” aliens and their families. He was not eligible to serve in the United States military.

Ms. Rees: Was it common then for people to finish law school in two years?

Ms. Putzel: No. It was unique to the World War II years. A reporter from the Baltimore Sun newspaper came out and took my picture. The caption read, “Local Portia first woman to graduate University of Maryland Law School in two years”. I remember asking the photographer, “This is just going to be a head and shoulders picture, isn’t it?” He assured me it was, so I sat comfortably in a lounge chair with my legs crossed. The picture appeared in the paper with my legs crossed to the knees. (See Figure #10.)

Ms. Rees: Did you have to take a bar exam in those days to get admitted?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. There was a bar exam.

Ms. Rees: Was there a preparation course for the bar exam?

Ms. Putzel: Yes and most everybody took it. I signed up for the course that was the most popular with the law students at the University of Maryland. I went to three classes and I was bored, so I decided to drop out of the prep classes. I told the professor I was dropping out and he didn’t offer to refund my money. He said, “If you don’t pass the first time, you can take it over again and you won’t have to pay for it”. That gave me a challenge. I began to study with my friend, Mary Arabian, who had graduated the semester before me, had taken the bar exam, and had not passed. We began to study together in my office after work and we both passed.

Ms. Rees: Did you pass the Bar exam on the first try?
Ms. Putzel: Yes.

Ms. Rees: Did you have a Character Committee interview before being admitted to the Bar?

Ms. Putzel: Yes.

Ms. Rees: How did your Character Committee interview go?

Ms. Putzel: Well, every applicant for admission to the Bar had to go through a Character Committee interview. The man who interviewed me was John Skeen, an elderly, very impressive attorney. He told me that my freshman advisor at Goucher had said that I lacked “leadership” qualities. I thought this was rather strange because I was 15 years old when she met me.

Ms. Rees: Did you eventually find out what had been going on?

Ms. Putzel: Eventually I found out she was a neo-Nazi.

Ms. Rees: Was there a ceremony or a swearing-in?

Ms. Putzel: Yes, there was a swearing-in, but I don't remember much about it except that my father insisted on a formal photograph after it was over.

Ms. Rees: What kinds of law jobs were available for women lawyers in the post-World War II years?

Ms. Putzel: None.

Ms. Rees: How about judicial clerkships?

Ms. Putzel: None. In 1945, everybody was waiting for the veterans to come home.

Ms. Rees: Were there any female judges?

Ms. Putzel: None.

Ms. Rees: Could women lawyers join bar associations?

Ms. Putzel: Not locally. The American Bar Association had started admitting women in 1918. Of course, the Women’s Bar Association admitted women and I
joined. Rose Zetzer was the first woman admitted to the Maryland State Bar Association in 1946. Jeannette Wolman was the first woman admitted to the Baltimore City Bar Association in 1957. In 1946, Judge Emory Niles, my favorite law professor, invited me to participate in a mock trial illustrating the “new” Rules of Procedure, but I didn’t practice law for several years after law school.

Ms. Rees: What job did you find after law school?

Ms. Putzel: I couldn’t find a job in the law. I had several non-lawyer friends who worked for the Department of Welfare, so I accepted a job there. I worked for the Department of Welfare in 1946 in their Intake Division. A few months into the job, I had a case where my supervisor insisted that a mother with four children take a streetcar back home to get written verification of the information on her application for benefits. While I waited for her to return, an alcoholic man who was disrupting the premises was given an emergency grant. I resigned. I should also mention the time I asked one of my black co-workers to go to lunch with me and she said, “Where, at Woolworth’s?”

Ms. Rees: What was your next job?

Ms. Putzel: I accepted a position as a “legal secretary with the privilege of private practice”. I was there from 1946–1947. Despite my former colleague’s advice about not admitting I could type, the opportunity was irresistible.

Ms. Rees: Did you have any cases as a “legal secretary with the privilege of private practice”?

Ms. Putzel: I had a case for my parents and at least one divorce case. I filed suit for my parents in the State court against the builder of their house. One day, when I was dressed for a Florida vacation, I stopped by the office to check my mail before leaving. In the mail was a Motion to transfer the case to Federal court. I had about two hours to get to the train. I knew that the Chief Judge of the Federal court was reputed to insist that “lady lawyers” appear in the Federal court in white shirts, dark skirts, and sensible shoes. I was wearing a black sleeveless sundress with a black and white polka dot cape, green snakeskin sandals, no stockings, and red toenail polish. There was no time to go home and change. With great trepidation, I went over to the Federal court with my

5 In 1879, F.W. Woolworth started his chain of five and dime stores that were in operation for over 100 years. Blacks were not permitted to eat at the Woolworth’s lunch counters. In the 1960’s, Woolworth’s stores nationwide were the scene of many lunch counter sit-ins protesting segregation.

NHR/ABA Trailblazers/Transcript #2/Last corrected 11/14/15
postponement request. Fortunately, the other judge was sitting; he graciously signed my Order and wished me a happy vacation.

Ms. Rees: Did you get to keep the fees you made from the cases you handled?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. They paid me a salary for being a legal secretary. It wasn't a lawyer job. I was a solo practitioner with a rent-free office.

Ms. Rees: How long were you a legal secretary with the privilege of private practice?

Ms. Putzel: About a year.

Ms. Rees: Where did you work next?

Ms. Putzel: New Amsterdam Casualty Company

Ms. Rees: How did you find that job?

Ms. Putzel: Well, in the 1940's, the classified newspaper advertisements were listed as, "Help Wanted—Male" or "Help Wanted—Female". There were no advertisements for lawyers in the female section. (No one thought that a woman would be looking for a job as a lawyer.) So, I disregarded the captions and found an advertisement in the male section for an assistant to the General Counsel of New Amsterdam Casualty Co. I answered the ad thinking that I could impress them to hire me and I did.

Ms. Rees: What happened after you were hired?

Ms. Putzel: My boss didn't know what to do with me. First, although I was supposedly executive personnel, he insisted that I sign a time sheet. Second, he assigned me to a desk in the secretarial pool where there was no smoking. (I was a smoker.) Third, my boss didn't know what work to give me, so he gave me a stack of U.S. Supreme Court opinions to read. I tried for a while, but it didn't get any better. I don't know whether he had any work for me to do or whether he didn't want me to do anything. I'll never know what he wanted or expected because I quit before I had a nervous breakdown.

Ms. Rees: How long were you with New Amsterdam Casualty Company?

Ms. Putzel: I was there 1947-1948.
Ms. Rees: What was your next job?

Ms. Putzel: I went to work for the Legal Aid Bureau as an attorney from 1948 until the end of 1950.

Ms. Rees: How did you come to work for the Legal Aid Bureau?

Ms. Putzel: It was well-known that the Legal Aid Bureau was the only "law firm" in Baltimore that would hire women attorneys. They had a woman as their Chief Attorney before I went to work there.

Ms. Rees: Who was the female Chief Attorney?

Ms. Putzel: Lee Synder.

Ms. Rees: Let's talk about Lee Synder later when we talk about Maryland women in the law. What was your position at the Legal Aid Bureau?

Ms. Putzel: I was a staff attorney.

Ms. Rees: What kind of law did you practice at the Legal Aid Bureau?

Ms. Putzel: Whatever came in the door.

Ms. Rees: They didn't have specialized departments?

Ms. Putzel: Not at that time.

Ms. Rees: How did you feel about working at Legal Aid?

Ms. Putzel: Legal Aid was great. I was happy working there. I had a small office with a very pleasant group of about 8 or 10 attorneys. We worked five and a half days a week. I particularly remember one Saturday morning when a young man came in who had been criminally charged with bigamy in West Virginia. He requested a male attorney, but after a thirty-minute wait, he grudgingly agreed to meet with me. As I recall, I advised him to stay out of West Virginia. My other memory of my time at the Legal Aid Bureau was my first trial in what was then the Supreme Bench of Baltimore City. When the Judge entered, my colleague told me to stand. They didn't teach that in law school.

Ms. Rees: So, did you have an Evidence course in law school?
Ms. Putzel: Yes. We also had Practice Dour. That was what they called it and I liked that class. I had Evidence in my last semester of law school. As I said, I took Evidence and Admiralty law from Judge Niles, one of my favorite law professors. I got an “A” on the evidence exam.

Ms. Rees: But you didn’t learn to stand when the judge enters the courtroom?

Ms. Putzel: No.

Ms. Rees: Tell me more about your experience at Legal Aid.

Ms. Putzel: Some things never change.

Ms. Rees: What do you mean?

Ms. Putzel: On September 26, 2011, a headline in the Baltimore Sun read, “In Happier Times David Gaines Would Have Been Able To Find a Job”. The article goes on to say that a 57-year old man was laid off in 2000 from his job as a sales manager for a company that supplied drums, cones, and message boards that alert motorists to road construction. However, work had dried up with road contractors due to the economy. Gaines said his woes continued with the car wreck that left him homebound in an upper body cast with back injuries and unable to continue his new part-time job at a golf course.

Ms. Rees: What’s remarkable about that story?

Ms. Putzel: Let me explain. When his unemployment benefits ran out, he reached out to the Maryland Legal Aid Bureau, specifically, to attorney Virginia Rosa who helped him get back his benefits.

Ms. Rees: What does this have to do with your time at the Legal Aid Bureau?

Ms. Putzel: That’s what interesting. More than 40 years earlier, in January 1949, Mr. Dessel, an unemployed veteran, his wife, and their three young children had been denied welfare because he was considered employable by the Department of Welfare. (That’s the same Department of Welfare I had just quit.) He was unable to receive any assistance from either the Family and Children’s Society or the Red Cross. In desperation, he appealed to the Legal Aid Bureau for help. The case was assigned to me.

Ms. Rees: What did you do?
Ms. Putzel: Jacob Hay, a reporter for the Baltimore Sun back in 1949, covered the story which read, in part, "This morning three milk bottles sat on the desk of Mrs. Constance Putzel, an attorney on the staff of the Legal Aid Bureau. Mrs. Dessel, neatly dressed, attractive, speaking in a soft voice with a Louisiana accent, tried to calm her three children."

Ms. Rees: What happened?

Ms. Putzel: The story continued in the Baltimore Sun for several days. It read, "The Dessel family furniture was loaded onto a van, hired by Micky Landay, who last evening offered both the van and a loft to the Dessel family. Suddenly, for no known reason, apparently driven to flight by the wreck of his home, Mr. Dessel got into his father's automobile, which he had borrowed for the day. He took off and his wife did not know where he went. From there on, Mrs. Putzel was in charge. Working quietly, she obtained the services of the truck offered by Mr. Landay and went to a grocery store where she purchased half a dozen cans of baby food and a few cans of soup so the family would have food after the move. Then Mrs. Putzel returned to the Dessel home to await the truck, to calm Mrs. Dessel, and to do the best she could for the family, which is actually not a responsibility of the Legal Aid Bureau. Mrs. Putzel said that if nobody would do anything, she would."

Ms. Rees: Was the Dessel family appreciative of your efforts?

Ms. Putzel: We never heard anything further from the family. They never responded to contact seeking reimbursement to Legal Aid for the out-of-pocket expenses for the food and milk.

Ms. Rees: Did you handle any other interesting cases while you were at the Legal Aid Bureau?

Ms. Putzel: Some things, like laws, do change, including the miscegenation laws.

Ms. Rees: You’re referring to laws barring inter-racial marriage?

Ms. Putzel: That’s correct. A unique case I handled involved a British war bride validly married to an African-American Air Corps officer in England during World War II. In 1946, they returned to Baltimore as a married couple. The husband sued the wife for divorce pursuant to the miscegenation law of Maryland. (When slavery was introduced in Maryland in the 1660's, the law prohibited marriages between white women and black or mulatto slaves or indentured servants. In
1664, Maryland enacted a law criminalizing such marriages.) In 1692, Maryland enacted a law forbidding free blacks from marrying whites regardless of previous conditions of servitude. In 1949, when I was at Legal Aid, these laws still remained in effect.

Ms. Rees: When did the miscegenation laws change?

Ms. Putzel: Not until 1967 when the United States Supreme Court decided Loving v. Virginia, which declared miscegenation laws unconstitutional. I have a copy of the decision here. Loving v. Virginia says,

Marriage is one of the basic civil rights fundamental to our very existence and survival. To deny this fundamental freedom on so unsupportable a basis as the racial classification embodied in these statutes, classifications so directly subversive of the principal of equality at the heart of the Fourteenth Amendment is surely to deprive the state's citizens of liberty without the due process of law. The Fourteenth Amendment requires that the freedom of choice to marry not be restricted by invidious racial discrimination. Under our Constitution, the freedom to marry and not marry a person of another race resides with the individual and cannot be infringed by the state.

Ms. Rees: Beautiful words. It's hard to imagine that being an issue today. What happened with the case back in 1949?

Ms. Putzel: They got divorced.

Ms. Rees: Based on miscegenation?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. They were divorced on the basis of miscegenation. The husband was represented by an all-black law firm. I think at that time it was Brown, Allen, & Watts.

Ms. Rees: Did you have any other interesting cases in your Legal Aid practice?

Ms. Putzel: A memorable and unusual case involved a client experiencing difficulty receiving widow’s benefits from the Veteran’s Administration because she was unable to verify her husband’s divorce from his first wife many years earlier. After I threatened to file a writ of mandamus, which is a writ or a court

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order from a higher court requiring a lower body to perform or refrain from a particular act. We got that straightened out quickly. The client was overwhelmingly appreciative and became a good client when I went into the private practice of law after I left the Legal Aid Bureau.

Ms. Rees: Did the widow get her benefits?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. She did.

Ms. Rees: Are there any more cases you remember from your Legal Aid Bureau years?

Ms. Putzel: There was another case reported in the Baltimore Sun newspapers. One day I was in the old People's Court where the presiding judge was The Honorable William Tippett. Judge Tippett said, "I thought I had seen everything in my ten years in this court, but this beats all." The Plaintiff claimed the Defendants owed him $12 for loans he allegedly made to them. The Plaintiff claimed that he was blind and deaf. He produced a typewritten card stating that to talk with him one should spell out the words on his hands. According to the newspaper article, I volunteered to represent him. The Judge told me what questions to ask. The Plaintiff responded in a deep, rasping voice. The Judge suspected the Plaintiff was not really blind and deaf. The Judge handed me a note suggesting that I ask a certain question. I asked the question out loud instead of spelling it on the man's hands. The man answered the question and his claim was dismissed.

Ms. Rees: When you went to court as a Legal Aid Bureau attorney, did you experience any discrimination based on sex?

Ms. Putzel: I was too scared to notice anything like that. I was scared to death.

Ms. Rees: Did the judges and/or their staff treat you differently?

Ms. Putzel: I have no idea how they treated anybody but me. I really didn't pay any attention to how I was being treated.

Ms. Rees: Did gender have an impact on being promoted at the Legal Aid Bureau?

Ms. Putzel: No.

Ms. Rees: It sounds like you enjoyed being at Legal Aid.
Ms. Putzel: Yes. I did very much. My colleagues were friendly and supportive. The Director was dedicated. The cases were varied and interesting.

Ms. Rees: Why did you leave the Legal Aid Bureau?

Ms. Putzel: After my husband, Bill, passed the bar exam, he was eager to practice law. It is interesting to note that just before I left, one of my few dissatisfied Legal Aid clients told me she was going to get a "real lawyer". I decided it was time to go out and become a real lawyer.

Ms. Rees: Before we continue with your legal career in private practice, I want to ask about your marriage. How did you meet Bill?7

Ms. Putzel: Bill was four years older than me. His family lived next door to my grandmother in Philadelphia. Bill was listed in my Baby Book as my first friend.

Ms. Rees: When did you and Bill start dating?

Ms. Putzel: I was dating a boy from New York. We were commuting once or twice a month to see each other — he would come down to Philadelphia or to Baltimore or I would go to New York.

Ms. Rees: Who was “the boy” you were dating in New York?

Ms. Putzel: Joe Sobel, your father’s first cousin.8

Ms. Rees: So you were going back and forth between Baltimore and New York to see Joe whom you were dating. What happened next?

Ms. Putzel: I had agreed to meet Joe in Philadelphia on a Sunday in June 1941. I went to Philadelphia a few days early because my aunt had been in the hospital and I wanted to spend some time with her. So, I went to Philadelphia on the Wednesday before I was supposed to meet Joe. I used to see Bill on the porch next door, playing bridge with his friends or reading a book. He usually ignored me.

7 Interviewer’s Note: William L. Putzel (“Bill”) and Constance B. Kellner (“Connie”) were married on August 28, 1945. When Bill died in 2004, they had been married for 59 years.

8 Interviewer’s Note: My father, Harold B. Rees, grew up in the Bronx and moved to Baltimore with his parents after he graduated from high school. He visited New York frequently for the first few years after the move until he met my mother, a Baltimore native. Connie and my father were friends and he often drove her to New York while she was dating my father’s first cousin, Joseph Sobel (“Joe”).
Ms. Rees: Was Bill in school at this point?

Ms. Putzel: No. He was working.

Ms. Rees: Was he living at home in Philadelphia then?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. On that Wednesday night, I was out on the porch and Bill was out on his porch. (The porches were adjacent with a little wooden railing between them.) We started talking and we talked quite a bit. On Thursday night, when he came home from work, we sat on the two porches again and talked. On Friday night, we talked for a while and Bill asked me if I wanted to listen to some of his classical records (which I still have stored in my basement). We went up to his room and listened to records and talked some more. Bill’s mother saw us together and gave Bill $10 to take me out to dinner and a movie. On Saturday night, we went to dinner at Piccoli’s, a white tablecloth restaurant with a jukebox on each table playing classical music. We had dinner and went to the movie Intermezzo with Ingrid Bergman and Leslie Howard. We came back to my grandmother’s house, sat on the sofa with the lights turned out and whatever — when all of a sudden the lights went on in the stairway and an apparition (my grandmother in her white nightshirt, hair piled on top of her head) appeared and said, “Oh, I just wanted to see what was going on.” We said, “Oh?” She turned off the light, went back upstairs, and Bill left. I went upstairs to get undressed. The bedroom window was open and I heard the theme music of Intermezzo being whistled below my window.

Ms. Rees: Was that Bill?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. So this was Saturday night and I thought and thought and thought about my planned meeting with Joe the next day. The next day, Joe came to Philadelphia and we talked for a while. I returned his fraternity key that he had given me some months before in New York and we broke up.

Ms Rees: How long after that were you and Bill married?

Ms. Putzel: Well, this would have been 1941. Bill went overseas to fight in World War II in early ‘42 right after Pearl Harbor. He did a tour in England for nearly four years under General LeMay. In General LeMay’s memoir, he said the weather on the air base where Bill was stationed was so bad that no matter where a soldier came from in the United States, it couldn’t have been as bad as it was on that base. Bill didn’t come back until after I had graduated law school in 1945. In recent years, I have wondered whether Bill may have suffered from post-traumatic stress syndrome.
Ms. Rees: What did Bill do after he was discharged from the Air Force?

Ms. Putzel: We had a long discussion on the back porch of our first house about what he was going to do with his life. He decided that he would go back to school and finish his college degree. He went on to law school and passed the Bar Exam with the third highest grade in the State of Maryland. He was admitted in 1950 and by the end of that year, we started practicing law together as partners.

Ms. Rees: Did you and Bill have children?

Ms. Putzel: Yes, we had one child, Arthur William Putzel, who was born on June 19, 1953.

Ms. Rees: Did you continue to practice law during your pregnancy?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. We decided to start our family after about two years in practice. Fortunately, the pregnancy was uneventful, so I was able to keep working. Also, I served as President of the Women's Bar Association of Maryland for one year before and during my pregnancy. I enjoyed anticipating the new baby.

Ms. Rees: Did anything unusual happen during your pregnancy besides serving as President of the Women's Bar Association and continuing to practice law?

Ms. Putzel: One notable experience involved walking up two flights of black slate stairs in the old People's Court Building above the Fish Market when I was eight months pregnant. (The judge ruled in my favor.)

Ms. Rees: Did you work right up to the time you gave birth?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. On June 18, 1953, my labor pains began. Bill drove me from the office to the Women's Hospital located at the corner of Lafayette and John Streets. The hospital was half a block from the new home of Lun and Barr (real name “Bernard”) Harris, our close friends. While I was in labor, Bill enjoyed dinner with Lun and Barr. He returned in time to see our son delivered.

Ms. Rees: What effect did becoming a mother have on your law practice?

Ms. Putzel: Not much. Bill was a very dedicated father and very helpful. Mothers were not breast-feeding in those days. Bill gave Art his early morning (6 A.M.) bottle. I stayed home for a couple of months after Art was born and then I went back to work part-time.
Ms. Rees: I assume that there was no support network for women practicing law and having children?

Ms. Putzel: Oh, no. There wasn't even a support network for women on how to dress for business. I remember when *Charm* magazine first came out with articles on business attire for women. Until then, you just had to figure it out for yourself. I remember one of our first secretaries coming into the office and asking me if it was okay to wear a nice pantsuit to work.

Ms. Rees: What was your response?

Ms. Putzel: I said, "sure".

Ms. Rees: Getting back to Art's birth, did you have help at home?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. I had a babysitter and part-time help. Sometimes my next-door neighbor, a grandmother, took care of the baby.

Ms. Rees: Did Art go to pre-school?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. By then we had moved our office uptown to halfway between the City courthouse and our home so that I could work while Art was in pre-school. Then I would meet the little yellow school bus that brought him home.

Ms. Rees: Where did Art go to elementary school?

Ms. Putzel: We were living in Baltimore County, Maryland. He was assigned to a new school that was under construction called Wellwood Elementary School. He attended an annex school until the construction of Wellwood Elementary School was completed. By then, Art was entering the second grade.

Ms. Rees: What did you do for afterschool childcare?

Ms. Putzel: We had a cleaning lady who could cook and for a very short time, she watched Art afterschool, prepared our dinner, and stayed until after dinner. She wasn't happy and we weren't happy, so that arrangement didn't last long. I starting leaving work to come home and meet Art's school bus.

Ms. Rees: How old was Art when you starting working full-time again?

Ms. Putzel: I think Art was about six years old.
End of Combined Interview #2 and Interview #6
Illustrations

Figure #9: CKP at her law school graduation, May 1945.

Figure #10: Baltimore Sun newspaper article, August 1945.
Ms. Rees: My name is Natalie H. Rees. I am taking the oral history of Constance K. Putzel. This transcript is a combination of the transcripts of the third and seventh interviews conducted on March 16, 2014 and August 24, 2014, respectively, using the same set of questions for both interviews. We are sitting in Connie’s home in Baltimore, Maryland. Connie, are there any corrections or additions to what we talked about last time?

Ms. Putzel: No.

Ms. Rees: How did you come to practice law with your husband?

Ms. Putzel: Bill only had one year of college before he went into the Service. After his discharge, he enrolled at the University of Baltimore to complete his undergraduate degree while he worked as a freelance window trimmer. When he had work downtown, he would meet my law school friends and I for lunch. He heard us talking about the law and after several months, he decided he wanted to go to law school. He finished college and went to the University of Maryland School of Law. As soon as he passed the Bar exam, he said, “I want to practice law”.

Ms. Rees: When did the office open?

Ms. Putzel: In December 1950.

Ms. Rees: Did either of you know how to set up a law office?

Ms. Putzel: No. We had no business experience or legal connections, but we jumped in with all four feet.
Ms. Rees: Where was your first office located?

Ms. Putzel: At first, we were in downtown Baltimore City where the courthouse was located. We rented a small office in the Fidelity Building at the corner of Charles and Lexington Streets, one block up a steep hill from the Courthouse.

Ms. Rees: Describe the office.

Ms. Putzel: We equipped the small reception area with three chairs, a secretarial desk and chair, and an old Underwood manual typewriter. The inner office had two desks and chairs at right angles. A third small room housed a liquid copier and a few bookshelves.

Ms. Rees: What is a liquid copier?

Ms. Putzel: You put a piece of paper in it and there was water under the machine and the paper passed out. I don't remember exactly how it worked. The only thing I remember about the liquid copier is that I spilled a cup of hot coffee on the machine and burned my left arm, leaving a scar.

Ms. Rees: Did you eventually switch to an electric typewriter?

Ms. Putzel: Yes, but not until the 1960's. We got our first computer in the 1980's.

Ms. Rees: Where did you get the furniture for the office?

Ms. Putzel: We bought used furniture. I did the typing and, with the advice of an accountant friend, Mischa Schneider, I kept the books. I also practiced law.

Ms. Rees: So you were typing, keeping the books, and practicing law. What was Bill doing?

Ms. Putzel: He primarily handled the collections practice.

Ms. Rees: How did you get business?

Ms. Putzel: We talked to my father about the collection cases that had been gathering dust in the office of the company attorney. Since no work was being done on the collection cases, my father agreed to our handling cases on a contingency fee basis of 25% before judgment and 33% if a judgment had to be obtained.
Ms. Rees: When you started the private practice with Bill, did you experience disparate treatment as a female lawyer?

Ms. Putzel: We sent out announcements to all our friends and relatives. We also sent out a letter I wrote directed to Bill on our new letterhead welcoming him to the firm. On the left side where the principals were listed, my name came first. I found out recently from Bill’s niece that his family did not approve of my name going first and did not approve of my working at the office after our son was born. However, in general, the disadvantages were minimal. I met with corporate clients if Bill was not available. Their first response was mild shock, then acceptance. After the first meeting, there was no problem. I took the attitude towards the client that this may be a little unusual for you, but I think I can help you.

Ms. Rees: Did you have plans to expand the collection practice to other areas of the law?

Ms. Putzel: We were led to believe that the debtors would tell us their problems, giving the reasons why they couldn’t pay their debts. We were advised that we could build a practice of accident cases, divorces, and other individual legal matters. It didn’t quite materialize that way. I do remember that we found out that one defendant was involved in an accident, had a claim, and didn’t hire us to represent her. When we asked her why, she said that she didn’t know we did that kind of work. We were very disturbed about that, but we discovered that if we pursued the collection cases diligently, step by step, there were real possibilities. We wrote letters, filed suits, obtained judgments, and, if we were still not able to collect, occasionally auctioned off property. Our philosophy was to be tough with the “won’t pays” and to be gentle with the “can’t pays”; this approach worked. Also, we were paid immediately. If we collected a dollar, we received 25 cents or 33 cents right away.

Ms. Rees: Were there other types of cases that you and Bill handled?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. National Guild Insurance Company was part of the conglomerate with which my father was associated. We handled some of their subrogation claims. (This is a claim made in a case in which an insurance company has paid an insured who subsequently recovers from a third party.)

Ms. Rees: Did you get cases from any other sources?

Ms. Putzel: We received referrals from family, friends, and other professionals. For example, one of Bill’s friends from law school was invited to represent one of
the national finance companies, Household Finance, because their collections attorney was retiring. Bill’s friend didn’t want to do collections, so he asked Bill to take on Household Finance as a client and we did. We began to make a comfortable living. Before long, we hired our first secretary and a little later a young man worked for us while he attended law school. I don’t recall that he was paid. Today, he would be called an intern.

Ms. Rees: Did the collections practice involve litigation?

Ms. Putzel: Very little. Most of the time, we filed in small claims court, nobody showed, and we obtained a default judgment.

Ms. Rees: Do you think it helped your career to practice with your husband?

Ms. Putzel: I have to admit that I think having a husband who was highly visible was helpful. I really think in many ways I was a trailblazer, but generally, I did not run into the problems your generation of women lawyers did.

Ms. Rees: Why do you think that?

Ms. Putzel: We had different expectations in the post-World War II years than your generation of women lawyers. Also, we weren’t a threat.

Ms. Rees: What do you mean?

Ms. Putzel: There weren’t that many of us, so they [the male attorneys] could afford to be nice to us.

Ms. Rees: Tell me about some of the cases that you handled yourself.

Ms. Putzel: Well, one of my first cases in private practice triggered a double dose of anxiety. First, I had never flown before. I took my first flight in a small, two-seater Piper Cub from what was then Friendship International Airport.¹ My destination was Ocean City on the Eastern shore of Maryland. My second source of anxiety was the case itself. I was flying to meet a young woman at the Volunteers of America Hospital where she was due to deliver a baby. The expectant father, a graduate student at the Johns Hopkins University, was

¹ Friendship Methodist Church occupied the site of the airport until 1948. In 1950, Friendship International Airport was dedicated by President Harry Truman. The State of Maryland, through the Maryland Department of Transportation, purchased Friendship International Airport in 1970. In the 1970’s, the airport was expanded, modernized, and re-named Baltimore-Washington Thurgood Marshall International Airport.
referred to me by his brother who was a good friend of mine. I had no idea how to handle this young woman who had, as it was called in those days, “gotten herself in trouble”. My real client was the expectant father who was paying my fees and expenses. He was not even close to being able to support a family. Abortion was out of the question as both illegal and dangerous.

Ms. Rees: Do you remember what year this was?

Ms. Putzel: It would have been 1951 or 1952. It was before my son was born. It seemed that placing the child for adoption was the young woman’s only option. I used my legal training to convince her that it was in her best interests to surrender the baby for adoption and get on with her life. She later sent me a gracious thank you note telling me that she had named the baby “Constance” after me and had placed the baby for adoption. That was the last time I heard from her.

Ms. Rees: Did you keep in touch with the birth father?

Ms. Putzel: Yes, I did. He completed his studies, enjoyed a new life with a wife (not the birth mother) and children, and had a successful career. (I confirmed all this by a recent perusal of Who’s Who in America.)

Ms. Rees: Did you handle any other interesting cases?

Ms. Putzel: There was a woman who was referred to me by one of my interns. (We had several interns over the years.) She was a beautiful, young woman who had been born without a vagina. In order to qualify for surgery to correct the problem, the Maryland law at the time required that she be married. She entered into a marriage of convenience, successfully survived the surgery, met the right man, and came to me for a divorce from the “husband of convenience”. He had no objection to the divorce and the divorce was uncontested.

Ms. Rees: Did she marry the “right one” and have children?

Ms. Putzel: I never heard from her again after the divorce, so I don’t know what happened.

Ms. Rees: Do you remember any other cases from those early years of practice?

Ms. Putzel: I received a referral from Legal Aid to represent a retired coal miner in his attempt to access his disability benefits from the United Mine Workers Union. I was early in my pregnancy with Art when I took the case. Six or seven
months later, a hearing was scheduled in Washington, D.C. at the United Mine Workers Union headquarters. By that time, I was due momentarily. I gave birth to our son and then Bill boarded the train to Washington, D.C. to take my place at the hearing. When he arrived at the Union Hall, he was greeted by an array of candy, cigarettes, cigars and an unwelcome mat. No attorneys were allowed at the hearing. The case dragged on and, sadly, the client received his pension posthumously.

Ms. Rees: Do you remember any notable cases you handled after Art was born?

Ms. Putzel: I remember a case in 1954 that was closely covered in the *Baltimore Sun* newspaper. The headline read, “Pair Separate After Two Years of Silence and Passing Notes”. The article said, “[t]he marriage of Mrs. Iris Rose Bogorad and her physician husband, Dr. Daniel Bogorad, for nearly two years settled down to an arrangement whereby communications were held and household routines were settled by means of written notes. Some of the notes were offered into evidence. One note from husband to wife said, “…the only thing in which you excel is drawer and cupboard straightening. I suppose that is a definite accomplishment.”

Ms. Rees: This was a news item?

Ms. Putzel: In 1954, it passed for news.

Ms. Rees: Which side did you represent?

Ms. Putzel: I represented the husband and Herbert Meyerberg represented the wife. The couple was my next door neighbors on Denlynn Road and he was my doctor. They were married in 1931 and began living in separate parts of the house in 1952.

Ms. Rees: Did you ever have any women associates, partners, or interns in your law firm?

Ms. Putzel: We only had one female intern, Leslie Gradet. She went on to become the Chief Clerk of the Maryland appellate courts.

Ms. Rees: Did your office remain in downtown Baltimore City?

Ms. Putzel: No. When Art was three years old, we moved to Mondawmin Mall to make it easier for me to work a half-day and meet the pre-school bus when Art came home. (Mondawmin Mall was still in Baltimore City, but was halfway
between our home and the downtown courthouse.) I still have a picture in my mind of a three-year old Art putting books on the lower shelves at our new office when we moved in. Mondawmin Mall was one of the earliest covered shopping malls. We were one of the first law firms to set up an office in this shopping center.

Ms. Rees: Did you bring the books from your downtown office?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. We bought the books from a man by the name of Ned DeRussey who went from office-to-office selling law books and bringing all of his customers up to date on what was going on with the other law firms.

Ms. Rees: So, he was the gossip carrier?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. Ned DeRussey was a friend to every lawyer in town.

Ms. Rees: How long did you stay at the Mondawmin Mall office location?

Ms. Putzel: We had the Mondawmin Mall office from 1953 until 1960 or so. We then moved to the Uptown Federal building. (The office was still in Baltimore City, but was close to the Baltimore County line.) By that time, I think we had two secretaries and we took on a partner. The new partner's wife was working in the Uptown Federal Building and he talked himself very quickly into a partnership position.

Ms. Rees: How long did this partnership last?

Ms. Putzel: Too long.

Ms. Rees: How long?

Ms. Putzel: From the 1960's until about 1980.

Ms. Rees: How did the partnership end?

Ms. Putzel: It ended badly.

Ms. Rees: How long was your office in the Uptown Federal building?

Ms. Putzel: We stayed there until 1972.
Ms. Rees: Do you remember any cases that you handled while you were in the Uptown Federal building?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. A psychiatrist referred a patient to me for representation. Her husband had left her, taking their seven children with him. We worked out a settlement and I continued to see her periodically over the years. She was a wonderful seamstress and she made me a beautiful ultra suede suit that I wore until it wore out. Once, we met for lunch and I admired the attractive handbag she was carrying. She said she had made it and asked if I would like one. One month later, she called me to come to her home to pick up the handbag she had made for me. When I arrived, I learned that she and her former husband were back together. The former husband’s mother had objected to the marriage and, after she died, they re-united. The former husband told me that he was so grateful for the way I handled their case fifteen years earlier because they were able to keep in touch and then get back together. We have exchanged Christmas cards ever since. They also came to the dinner in 2011 where I was honored by the Maryland State Bar Association as Senior Lawyer of the Year.

Ms. Rees: Do you remember any other cases from that period of time?

Ms. Putzel: I had a client I wasn’t really happy with because I thought she was extravagant. I was preparing her financial statement and she wanted $5,000 per year for clothes (this was 25 or 30 years ago). I thought this was too much and I told her so. After the case was over, the husband sent me flowers and a beautiful note that I still have.

Ms. Rees: Where did you move the office after the Uptown Federal Building?

Ms. Putzel: We moved to the Pikesville Plaza Building and then to Pomona Square. By that time, we had a payroll of 12 or 13 people.

Ms. Rees: My goodness! Was that attorneys or support staff?

Ms. Putzel: Both. I believe we had three attorneys besides Bill and I.

Ms. Rees: In the 1970’s, when your primary focus became Family Law, did Bill continue to handle the collections cases?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. He also did Commercial Law and some Estate Planning.

Ms. Rees: Did you continue to have interns in the law firm over the years?

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2 Interviewer’s Note: Both of these locations are in Baltimore County, Maryland.
Ms. Rees: Yes. When we were in the Fidelity Building in downtown Baltimore, we took on a young man whose wife was the secretary to the Sheriff of Baltimore City. He was a law student named Bob Evans who later became a prominent Baltimore County attorney.

Ms. Rees: Did Bill have different expectations of you as a spouse, mother and law partner?

Ms. Putzel: Good question. I have no idea what Bill expected. I really, really, have no idea what his expectations were because he never shared then with me. However, if I was in court and there was a problem with Art in school, Bill would take over and go to the school. Bill was very cooperative in helping me with Art.

Ms. Rees: Did the women attorneys in the 1940’s and 1950’s discuss childcare arrangements among themselves?

Ms. Putzel: Not really. I remember some of the other women attorneys who had children. Anna Carton had a supportive husband who helped with the childcare, but I didn’t get to know Anna Carton that well. Goldie Miller had two children. I interviewed her daughter-in-law for the book I am writing and she told me that Goldie practiced law with her brother and her husband helped with the children.

Ms. Rees: In my day, that is the 1970’s, women attorneys talked incessantly about childcare arrangements, what to wear to court, etc. It doesn’t sound like your contemporaries had those discussions.

Ms. Putzel: Once we moved our office out of downtown Baltimore City, I didn’t have much opportunity to meet with the other women attorneys.

Ms. Rees: During the years that you had a child to raise, did you also have responsibilities for elderly relatives?

Ms. Putzel: My husband was very helpful with my mother after my father died. My mother moved to a retirement home and my husband took care of her affairs. I got along better with my father and Bill got along better with my mother.

Ms. Rees: So you didn’t have the difficulties we have today as the so-called sandwich generation?

Ms. Putzel: No, I really didn’t.
Ms. Rees: How do you feel your career impacted on your child-raising responsibilities?

Ms. Putzel: I think you would have to ask my son. I'm beginning to think that it affected him more than I thought. But, I am only beginning to feel that now. The only specific incident that I can remember is when Art was in elementary school. He was given an assignment for Valentine's Day to write an essay about someone born in February and also to dress a doll for Valentine's Day. I helped Art with his essay, but not with dressing the doll. Somewhere along the line, the teacher changed the assignment and said not to bother with the essay, just dress the doll. I told the teacher that I was not going to help dress a doll. I don't know whether that bothered Art or not.

Ms. Rees: Were you the parent who took Art to medical or dental appointments?

Ms. Putzel: Not just me. Bill did a lot of that, too.

Ms. Rees: Who stayed home if Art was sick on a school day?

Ms. Putzel: Whichever one of us was available.

Ms. Rees: Who handled the responsibilities at home?

Ms. Putzel: Bill didn't like the way I made beds. He said he made them better in the army. So I let him make the beds. And I still don't like making beds. I think we did the dishes together before we had a dishwasher.

Ms. Rees: How about the cooking? Who did the cooking when you both came home from work?

Ms. Putzel: I liked to cook. Bill would help. One week, I remember I said to him, "You know, you've been really helpful around the house and with the shopping. But I always have the top responsibility. For one week, I suggest that you take the top responsibility and I'll help." The next day, I had a meeting downtown and got home about 6 o'clock. Bill was standing over the stove, stirring a pot, and stirring it and stirring it and it wasn't thickening. (He was making a cheese sauce for a dish of ham and Brussels sprouts.) So, I said, "Did you put enough flour in?" He said he had used the amount the recipe called for and more. I asked which canister he had used. I found out that he had been using powdered sugar instead of flour and that was why it didn't thicken. So, we threw it out and started over.
Ms. Rees: So, Bill wasn’t much of a cook.

Ms. Putzel: Oh, he eventually got better.

Ms. Rees: When did Putzel and Putzel end and why?

Ms. Putzel: The biggest challenge I faced in my marriage was trying to get my husband to realize his potential. He had great potential, which he did not achieve. When he was in school, he wanted to be a physicist and his family discouraged him from what he wanted to do. He must not have had a strong personality because he apparently didn’t rebel. After Bill died, I found an interesting letter, a card really, from a woman in his cancer survivor’s support group. She talked about how much she enjoyed Bill being in the group and how his strength and consistency had helped her. Apparently, Bill had talked in the group about another time in his life when he was very vulnerable. He also talked about his parents. He must have talked more in that group than he ever did to me. He never told me what he expected, what he wanted. I never knew.

Ms. Rees: Even though you were practicing law side-by-side for almost 40 years?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. Yes. He did a series of self-destructive things in the law practice. One of the therapists we saw said he had an additive personality although he didn’t drink or do drugs. He was addicted to his pipe that caused the cancer, which eventually killed him.

Ms. Rees: What caused the law firm of Putzel & Putzel to break up?

Ms. Putzel: We had been seeing a psychiatrist and the psychiatrist suggested that Bill and I separate our law practices. We dissolved the partnership in 1989. We opened a second office in downtown Baltimore City and I moved to that office. I shared space with Rody & Rody, a husband and wife who were practicing together. While I was in the downtown office, Bill apparently dipped into a client’s trust account from an estate. The client complained and Bill was disbarred.

Ms. Rees: What did Bill do after he was disbarred?

Ms. Putzel: Bill volunteered with the Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Unit.

Ms. Rees: Did you try to communicate with Bill about these issues?
Ms. Putzel: Yes. I wrote him several letters because he would not talk to me face-to-face. Art has some of the letters and I have some of the letters. I have one here I could read to you. I wrote it when we were waiting to find out if Bill had cancer. I'm not keeping any secrets...

Ms. Rees: Go on...

Ms. Putzel: The letter reads:

Dear Bill, I woke up this morning at 6:20 A.M. and I couldn't get back to sleep. I was wide-awake thinking about whether or not I should go with you on Wednesday. I was convinced that you would be depressed if the news was not good and I had no idea how you might react. I also knew that I would not be able to function unless I knew. I tried to tell myself that I didn't care, but, of course, I do. Whatever happens to you, whatever you do, affects me. It always has. I am still badly hurt by all the times you've hurt me by lying, by running away, and by leaving me with the consequences. My feelings towards you are mixed. We both should remember that we are not each other's mothers. We have both been badly damaged by our early lives. We have both lacked self-esteem. From my view, you have dealt with this through a pattern of resignation, of passivity, and an attitude of "what's the use? Why bother if nobody cares?" I, on the other hand, have tried to prove myself through achievement and accomplishment. Many times we have heard the phrase "Love me for myself". If we don't know whom "myself" is, how can we love? There are many trite phrases used to justify our lives or our way of doing things. Not only do we have to play the hand we are dealt, we have to play each hand as it is dealt, not before and not after. You may say you don't want to discuss possibilities until you know. I need to discuss worst scenarios or organize to the point where I can sleep and not become paralyzed. You were taught avoidance, I was taught confrontation. You said that if you were given a death sentence, you would run away to the Amazon. Where does that leave me? If you can talk, I'd like to. If you can bring yourself to share, we can meet whatever we have to; if not, I am going to have to find another alternative, possibly moving out of town and starting a new life with whatever time I have left. I can't continue like this. I have not been sleeping,
I am always tense and the usual ways of relieving it are no longer working. If I stay here, it is not fair to lean on Art. If we separate, I can't face our friends. Maybe it's my turn to run away.

I wrote that letter about six months before Bill died. I still couldn't get through to him, but I do think I write well.

Ms. Rees: A beautiful, but painful letter...

Ms. Putzel: Yeah.

Ms. Rees: When did Bill die?

Ms. Putzel: Bill died in 2004, about five years after the partnership was dissolved.

Ms. Rees: Where did you go after Putzel & Putzel dissolved in 1989?

Ms. Putzel: I went to Bob Evans’ office in Towson, Maryland and became “of counsel” with his law firm (then Evans, George & Bronstein). I stayed there a few years and left after Bob Evans died.

Ms. Rees: Where did you go after Evans, George & Bronstein?

Ms. Putzel: I shared office space with an attorney, Kristine Howanski.

Ms. Rees: Were you a solo practitioner after 1989?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. I was a solo practitioner from 1989 until I retired in 2007.

Ms. Rees: Did you like being a sole practitioner?

Ms. Putzel: I didn't like being a solo practitioner as much as I liked having a partner or a firm. I liked having somebody to discuss cases with.

Ms. Rees: At what point in your legal career did you switch to Family Law?

Ms. Putzel: I didn’t switch to Family Law. I handled Family Law cases right from the start. However, I began to concentrate more on Family Law in the early 1970’s after I served on the Maryland Commission on the Status of Women.
Ms. Rees: In the early 1970's, when you started to specialize in Family Law, were there other Family Law specialists in the Baltimore area?

Ms. Putzel: Just two others and they were both male, Herbert Myerberg and Howard Bregel. Family Law was considered a stepchild of the legal profession; most of the big firms wouldn't touch it. There was a great need for good practitioners in the Family Law field.

Ms. Rees: So were you the first woman attorney in Maryland to specialize in Family Law?

Ms. Putzel: It is hard to say.

Ms. Rees: In private practice, outside of Legal Aid...?

Ms. Putzel: There was the four-woman law firm with Rose Zetzer, Lottie Friedler, Anna Carton, and LaRue Parker. Their firm was established before I started to practice law. I remember a newspaper article saying they represented husbands in divorce cases because a woman lawyer was the only one who could understand where the wife was coming from.

Ms. Rees: When did you switch the focus of your law practice to Elder Law?

Ms. Putzel: In the 1990's, I handled a child custody case that really tore me up. The case involved a beautiful, bold three year-old. The father was Pakistani-American and the mother was Indian-American. The father (whom I represented) moved to New York from Maryland and had very limited visitation. The mother was living with her family in Maryland and the father was living with his family in New York. The hearing was held in Maryland and the father took the oath on the Koran. I had observed the father and his son during a visitation and they had a fine relationship. Eventually, the father could not afford the costs of the commute or the costs of continuing litigation. His contact with the child dropped off. I don’t know what happened with the case, but after that, I didn’t handle any more contested child custody cases. In the meantime, I had joined the American Academy of Elder Law Attorneys and I was doing more work with elder clients. I gradually started doing less Family Law and more Elder Law until I was doing Elder Law almost full-time. I did Elder Law until I retired.

Ms. Rees: What kinds of Elder Law cases did you handle?

Ms. Putzel: I did estate planning and probate. I enjoyed doing Elder Law until I retired.
Ms. Rees: What was your last office?

Ms. Putzel: The last office, I was “of counsel” to the female attorney who took over my estate practice. She let me use her office to see clients.

Ms. Rees: What made you decide to retire in 2007?

Ms. Putzel: That’s a good question. I had been practicing law for sixty-two years and I felt that I was no longer keeping up with the law as it was evolving. I remembered a television show I had seen many years earlier where an elderly attorney was in court and kept forgetting things. I was 85 years old and I wanted to retire while I still had full capabilities.

Ms. Rees: What kind of activities have you been doing since you retired?

Ms. Putzel: For a while I did volunteer legal work. I volunteered with Jewish Legal Services, which held a legal clinic once a month on a Monday night. We interviewed clients and gave legal advice at no charge. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to represent a woman at no charge who had been receiving health care services. Her husband and daughter came to the legal clinic on her behalf because she had been notified that her health care services were being discontinued. She had appealed the decision and had supposedly been sent a letter by the authorities notifying her that if she continued receiving the benefits during the appeal, she would be charged. She received a bill for $25,000.

Ms. Rees: What had happened with the appeal?

Ms. Putzel: The appeal had been denied and she had continued receiving the health care services; hence, the $25,000 bill. She claimed that she had never received the notification letter. I did some investigating and asked the state authorities to produce a copy of the notification letter they had allegedly sent to her. They could not produce a copy of the letter and they ultimately withdrew the demand for $25,000. The family wrote a beautiful letter to Jewish Legal Services and I was given an award from the Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland.

Ms. Rees: I understand that you are writing an autobiography.

Ms. Putzel: It started out as a history of women lawyers in Maryland, but I learned that was being done elsewhere. I was having fun writing, so I decided that I would write the book focusing on my story.

Ms. Rees: What is the title of your book?
Ms. Putzel: It is titled, “Who, Me?”

Ms. Rees: What does the title mean?

Ms. Putzel: One of my favorite law professors was my Evidence teacher. In 1946, one year after I graduated, he invited me to participate in a mock trial at the Maryland State Bar Association Mid-Year Meeting. I was the witness. The opposing attorneys were Roszel Thompson, a federal judge, and John Marshall Butler, a Senator. No matter what question they asked me, I answered, “Who me?”

Ms. Rees: Is that what you were supposed to do?

Ms. Putzel: No. Oh, no. That was just my idea. I answered the question after I said, “Who me?” But it gave me time to think about my answer. The other interesting thing is that six months later, the Maryland State Bar Association admitted a woman, Rose Zetzer, for the first time.

Ms. Rees: How is the book coming along?

Ms. Putzel: When my grandson died two years ago, it just turned my whole life upside down. I am still trying to recover, but it is not easy.

Ms. Rees: How did that affect the book?

Ms. Putzel: I made the dedication to the book about him and I think about him all the time.

Ms. Rees: Were you able to continue writing?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. Gloria Steinem is supposed to have said that writing is the only thing [she] can do and not think [she] should be doing something else. I do enjoy writing. However, I have put the writing on hold while I work on this.³

Ms. Rees: What made you decide to participate in the ABA Project on Women Trailblazers in the Law?

Ms. Putzel: I had worked with the ABA on several projects while I was actively practicing. I was a member of several Maryland State Bar Association sections, councils, and committees. Through the Elder Law Committee, I received a copy of the ABA leadership directory. Looking through the directory, I saw the Women

³ The ABA Project on Women Trailblazers in the Law.
Trailblazers in the Law Project. I contacted the ABA Senior Lawyers director and the next thing I knew, I became a trailblazer.

Ms. Rees: How do you feel about being a part of the ABA Women in the Law Trailblazers Project?

Ms. Putzel: As I said in our first interview, I was delighted to participate. My participation in the Project allows me to create a legacy after the worst tragedy in my life, the loss of my only grandson two years ago in a tragic accident.

Ms. Rees: And do you intend to go back and finish the autobiography?

Ms. Putzel: Oh, I definitely do.

Ms. Rees: Does the book still contain the women in the law component?

Ms. Putzel: I am leaving a good bit of the women in the law in my autobiography – at least the ones that I knew who were ahead of me.

Ms. Rees: When you were in private practice, did you belong to any organizations besides bar associations?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. I joined the World Federalists. I became president of our local chapter and later served on the National Council. It was a very exciting, inspirational experience. I also joined the National Lawyers Guild while I was working at the Legal Aid Bureau. When I learned that the National Lawyers Guild was under investigation by the House Unamerican Activities Committee (HUAC), I resigned my membership. Not that I was a coward, but I guess I was.

Ms. Rees: Did you publish during your legal career?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. My real claim to fame was the *Divorce Organization System*.

Ms. Rees: Was it a manual?

Ms. Putzel: I guess you could call it a manual. It was a looseleaf binder about three inches thick, spelling out the entire procedure for handling a divorce from the initial interview through the final divorce.

Ms. Rees: What year did it come out?
Ms. Putzel: It first came out in 1984. I heard a speech at the American Bar Association annual meeting and I decided to adapt what I learned to organize my own law practice. Eventually, it was published by the Maryland Institute for Continuing Professional Education in Law (MICPEL).

Ms. Rees: Did you have updates published?

Ms. Putzel: It was updated in 1988, 1993 (or 1994), and then it went onto a CD.

Ms. Rees: Did you publish anything else?

Ms. Putzel: I had an article published by the ABA in their senior lawyers magazine. It was an article about older marriages breaking up when people were 60 or 70 or 80. Later, in 1992, I did a book for the ABA General Practice Section on representing the older client in a divorce. The book was an artistic success, but not a financial success.

Ms. Rees: What else did you publish?

Ms. Putzel: In 1973, I wrote an article for the Maryland Bar Journal that was a review of a book entitled "Family Law Practice and Procedure Handbook" written by Neva Tally Morris of the Arkansas Bar. I started that review: "A stepchild of the legal profession for many years, the Family lawyer, like the Family doctor, is beginning to command the attention of increasing numbers of highly competent practitioners."

Ms. Rees: Do you remember anything else you published?

Ms. Putzel: I did another article on representing the senior citizen client. I also did an article in the Maryland Bar Journal on managing a small law practice. Finally, I did a chapter in a book published by the American Bar Association. The chapter was called, "A Lawyers' Guide to Buying, Selling, Merging, and Closing a Law Practice".

Ms. Rees: Was that last thing you published before you retired?

Ms. Putzel: That's right.

Ms. Rees: I understand that you served on the Character Committee, interviewing prospective candidates for admission to the Bar.

Ms. Putzel: Yes. The Character Committee was very interesting.
Ms. Rees: How many years did you serve on the Character Committee?

Ms. Putzel: From 1976 to 1996, approximately 20 years.

Ms. Rees: Did you ever recommend against a candidate?

Ms. Putzel: Only once. I had an applicant who troubled me enough that I recommended against his admission. Consequently, the Court of Appeals admitted the applicant even though the Character Committee advised against it. One year later, he was disbarred for some kind of professional misconduct.

Ms. Rees: Have you heard from any of your former interviewees?

Ms. Putzel: I have some very nice letters from applicants I interviewed, thanking me. I don’t have too many, but it surprises me whenever I receive one.

Ms. Rees: I was with you at Judge Bothe’s celebration of life and I remember a man coming up to you and saying that he had recently become a judge. He reminded you that you had been his Character Committee interviewer.

Ms. Putzel: Yes. I have had a number of people do that.

Ms. Rees: What kinds of things have they said?

Ms. Putzel: They have said very nice things. But they were all people I had approved. Over the years, there have been hundreds. My treasure is a handwritten letter from Brooks Robinson written on behalf of a candidate.4

Ms. Rees: Have you received any awards since your retirement?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. I received an award in 2011 as Senior Lawyer of the Year from the Maryland State Bar Association, Senior Lawyers Section. I was honored at a dinner attended by many of my family, friends, and colleagues.

Ms. Rees: Do you recall how many people were there?

Ms. Putzel: There were about sixty people, including you.

Ms. Rees: Have you received any other awards?

4 Interviewer’s Note: Brooks Robinson (1937 - ) played his entire 23-year major league baseball career for the Baltimore Orioles. A Baltimore street has been named after him. He is widely considered one of the greatest defensive third basemen in major league baseball history.

NHR/ABA Trailblazers/Transcript #3/Last corrected 11/14/15
Ms. Putzel: I mentioned earlier the *pro bono* legal services award. Also, in November [2014], I will receive an award from the University of Maryland Francis Carey King School of Law at the Alumni Honors Banquet. It is called the "Star Award" and is one of four awards to be given out that night.

Ms. Rees: How do you feel about winning these awards?

Ms. Putzel: Of course, I'm pleased, but what I care most about are the clients who were so appreciative of my help.

Ms. Rees: For example...?

Ms. Putzel: I represented a male psychiatrist in the preparation of an antenuptial agreement. In 1986, he and his wife were attending a Sunday discussion group when someone said that she had the best lawyer in Maryland. My former client said, "If it isn't Connie Putzel, you don't have the best lawyer in Maryland". That was very gratifying.

End of Combined Interview #3 and Interview #7
Ms. Rees: My name is Natalie H. Rees. I am taking the oral history of Constance K. Putzel. This transcript is a combination of the transcripts of the fourth and eighth interviews conducted on March 30, 2014 and September 7, 2014, respectively, using the same set of questions for both interviews. We are sitting in Connie’s home in Baltimore, Maryland. Connie, are there any corrections or additions to what we talked about last time?

Ms. Putzel: No.

Ms. Rees: We talked about how you went to law school during World War II when the law schools filled their empty seats with female students. Do you know about the Maryland women who went to law school in the earlier years of the 20th century?

Ms. Putzel: Well, Belva Lockwood¹ was denied admission to the Maryland Bar in 1878. Judge Magruder of the Circuit Court for Prince Georges County, Maryland said,

> God has set a bound for women. Man was created first and woman a part of him. Like the sun and the moon moving in their different orbits, the Great Seas have their bounds and the eternal hills and rocks that are set above them cannot be removed......[I] pray

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¹ Interviewer’s Note: Belva Ann Bennett Lockwood (1830-1917) was an attorney, politician, educator, and author. She was one of the first female attorneys in the United States and was the first woman admitted to practice before the United States Supreme Court. (She had to sue for permission to appear.) She was active in women’s rights throughout her life and overcame many social and personal obstacles related to gender-based restrictions. She was admitted to the District of Columbia Bar, but not to the Maryland Bar.
[to] God the time [will] never come when women [are]
admitted to the Bar of Maryland.

I love that quote. I hope you can include it [in this transcript].

Ms. Rees: Who was the first woman admitted to the Maryland Bar?

Ms. Putzel: Etta Maddox the first woman admitted to the Bar in Maryland, graduated from what was then called the Baltimore Law School. She was admitted to the Maryland Bar in 1902. After Etta Maddox, there may have been two or three other women who went to law school. Five years after Etta Maddox, Emilie Doetsch was admitted to the Maryland Bar. She graduated from the old Baltimore Law School before it closed, but her primary career was not in the law.

Ms. Rees: Do you know why?

Ms. Putzel: Perhaps her timing was wrong. Perhaps she didn't have the right contacts.

Ms. Rees: What was her primary career?

Ms. Putzel: She pursued a career in journalism. Emilie Doetsch died in 1969. The following year, her alma mater, Goucher College, published this tribute: “We never thought of her as a militant suffragist, for she was such a good listener — a model which some modern reformers might profitably follow”.

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2 Interviewer's Note: Henrietta ("Etta") Haynie Maddox (c.1860-1933) was admitted to the Baltimore School of Law (later the University of Maryland School of Law) and became its first female graduate in 1901. However, the Maryland Court of Appeals refused her application to take the bar exam on the basis that only "male citizens of Maryland" could practice law. Ms. Maddox went to the Maryland legislature and in 1902 successfully promoted a bill to make it legal to admit women to the Maryland bar, paving the way for women in Maryland to enter the profession of law. During her working career, Ms. Maddox practiced law, became involved in the women's suffrage movement, and spent her entire adult life fighting for women's rights. She was inducted into the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame in 2003.

3 Interviewer's Note: Emilie A. Doetsch (1882-1969) graduated from the Baltimore Law School in 1906 and was the second woman admitted to the Maryland Bar in 1907. She never married. In 1913, working as a reporter for the Baltimore News, she participated in a 19-day women's suffrage march from New York City to Washington, D.C., filing daily reports with the newspaper. In 1923, she became the first woman to seek political office in Baltimore City when she ran for a seat on the Baltimore City Council. (She lost the election, but the most women voters in Baltimore since the passage of the 19th amendment in 1920 turned out to vote.) In 1928, Doetsch became the first woman to hold a major post in the Baltimore government when she was appointed an Assistant City Solicitor. (However, she was forced to resign in 1932.) She was President of the Women's Bar Association in 1930.
Ms. Rees: When did the Baltimore Law School stop admitting women?

Ms. Putzel: In 1907, for no apparent reason, the Baltimore Law School closed its doors to women applicants. I have a copy of a 1957 article in the Baltimore Sun newspaper, under a caption “Fifty Years Ago”, saying, “Women who have a burning desire to become lawyers and make love to juries have no longer any school at which they can study Blackstone. The Baltimore Law School has, without ceremony, closed its doors to them.” Founded in 1816, my alma mater, the University of Maryland School of Law, is the second oldest law school in the United States. It merged with the Baltimore Law School in 1913, but the newly combined law schools (called collectively the University of Maryland School of Law) did not admit women again until 1920.

Ms. Rees: Do you know any of the women who went to law school in the 1920’s?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. One woman was Sarah Rosenberg Burke. She applied for admission in 1917, but was denied because there were no toilet facilities for women. (When Sarah and other women were finally admitted to the law school in the 1920’s, they were permitted to use the toilet facilities at the University of Maryland School of Social Work across the street.) Sarah practiced law with her husband and apparently never did much on her own. I did read somewhere that she had a daughter, but I have never been able to find her so I know very little about Sarah Burke. I do know that Sarah was given an 80th birthday party and, when presented with a tribute, she was asked how she felt about being 80 years old. She replied, “I would like to hear better but then I am told I’m not missing much.”

Ms. Rees: If you know, what was the tuition for law school in the 1920’s?

Ms. Putzel: At the University of Maryland School of Law in the 1920’s, the tuition for residents of Maryland was $150/semester and the tuition for non-residents of Maryland was $200/semester.

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4 Interviewer’s Note: Sarah Rosenberg Burke (c.1900-1988) became one of the first female graduates of the University of Maryland School of Law in 1923, the same year she married Joseph Burke. After she was admitted, the young couple began practicing law together. In 1927, Sarah Burke, Jeannette Wolman, Henrietta Stonestreet, Ida Kloze, Adelaide Lindenberg, Goldie Miller, and Helen Sherry met to establish the Women’s Lawyers’ Association of Maryland as no bar associations would admit women. The Women Lawyers’ Association of Maryland later became the Women’s Bar Association of Baltimore City and is now the Women’s Bar Association of Maryland. Sarah Rosenberg Burke gave up the practice of law in the 1930’s when she and her husband decided to start a family.
Ms. Rees: Who were some of the other women admitted to law school in the 1920's?

Ms. Putzel: Other women were Jeanette Rosner Wolman, Ruth Shapiro Newman, Henrietta Stonestreet, Goldie Miller Goodman, and Rose Zetzer.

Ms. Rees: Tell me about Jeanette Wolman.5

Ms. Putzel: Jeanette was my surrogate mother and mentor. She was one of my dearest friends. In 1918, she applied to Columbia University Law School and was informed that women were not admitted. (Columbia suggested that she consider some other profession.) She did try social work for a while until she, together with a small group of other women, was admitted to the University of Maryland School of Law in 1920. I met her shortly after I was admitted to the Bar in 1945, when I joined the Women's Bar Association. (At the time, women could join the American Bar Association, but they could not join any local bar associations.) The Women's Bar Association was the only local bar association I could join. In 1957, Jeanette became the first woman admitted to the Bar Association of Baltimore City.

Once women lawyers could join the Bar Association of Baltimore City, the Women's Bar Association of Baltimore City began to debate whether or not to disband. Some thought the Women's Bar Association was needed to encourage and endorse the appointment of women judges. Others thought that the group should become a social, networking club. The climax of the fight came when 16 members, including the immediate past presidents of the last 6 or 7 years, filed a joint resignation. An article by Louis Azrael in the News American newspaper noted "...among [the resigning attorneys] are some of the most active lawyers in the City...for instance, Mary Arabian, Constance Putzel, Jeanette Wolman, Elsbeth Bothe, and Shirley Jones." The interesting part is that Mary Arabian, Elsbeth Bothe, and Shirley Jones all went on to become judges.

5 Interviewer's Note: Jeanette Rosner Wolman (1902 - 1999) was a member of the first class to graduate women from the University of Maryland School of Law in the Class of 1924. She attended law school at night and worked as a social worker by day. After being denied membership in the local bar associations, she helped found the Women's Bar Association of Maryland in 1927. Wolman was the first woman admitted to the Bar Association of Baltimore City in 1957. As the first chair of the Maryland Commission on the Status of Women, appointed by the Governor in 1965, she continued her lifelong support of women's rights. Wolman practiced law with her husband until he died in 1978. She retired from the practice of law in 1998 at the age of 96 and died one year later.

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In 1965, Jeanette was appointed by then Governor Millard Tawes as the first chair of the Maryland Commission on the Status of Women. During her tenure as Chair, the Commission prepared a report covering more than 100 pages and recommending, among other things, a minimum wage of $1.25 per hour to cover all employees (including women).

She practiced law with her husband, Paul Wolman, whom she married shortly after completing law school. They continued to practice law together for 53 years until Paul died in the late 1970's. Jeanette and her husband had two sons, Paul, Jr. and Benjamin, who both became attorneys, and several grandchildren of whom Jeanette was very proud.

In 1972, Jeanette was named Women of the Year by the Maryland Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc. In 1977, she was named in Notable Maryland Women, a book published by the Maryland Bicentennial Commission, the Girl Scouts of America, and the Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame. In 1991, when Jeanette was 90 years old, Hillary Rodham Clinton presented her with the Margaret Brent Award given by the American Bar Association. She was also named one of 150 women who made a distinctive difference in the City of Baltimore on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the City.

When Jeanette died in 1998 at the age of 96, I was honored and privileged to speak at her funeral. It was one of the highest honors I have ever received. In my final tribute I said, “Jenny truly believed that all people are created equal. She lived and worked toward achieving this objective. Her life was an inspiration to all of us, white or black, rich or poor, male or female, old or young. She was a ‘woman for all seasons’. A woman in full...”.

Ms. Rees: In what way was Jeanette Wolman a mentor to you?

Ms. Putzel: In just about every way. I am sure she was responsible for my appointments to the Commission on the Status of Women as well as the Equal Rights Commission. (The Equal Rights Commission never got off the ground.) Jeanette was a wonderful human being who gave the new women lawyers, including myself, advice and encouragement. She was a wife and a mother and a lawyer so she was a role model in every way: Her personal qualities of dedication, tenacity, and gentleness, coupled with a keen intelligence, won her the respect of men and women alike, laypeople and lawyers. I can’t begin to

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Interviewer’s Note: Margaret Brent (c.1601 – c.1671) of St. Mary’s City, Maryland was the first female land owner in Maryland and the first woman in the North American colonies to appear before a court of Common Law.

NHR/ABA Trailblazers/Transcript #4/Last corrected 11/15/15.
express how many women lawyers' careers were touched by Jeanette during her more than fifty years at the Bar.

Ms. Rees: Did the women attorneys in those days share your admiration of Jeanette Wolman?

Ms. Putzel: Well, one female attorney whom I will not name said that Jeanette wasn't a real attorney because she didn't go to court. The person who said this was a good friend of mine, so I won't name her.

Ms. Rees: Did you know Ruth Shapiro Newman?

Ms. Putzel: I knew her, but not well. I know she had one daughter who became a lawyer, too.

Ms. Rees: Did you know Henrietta Stonestreet?7

Ms. Putzel: I did not know Henrietta Stonestreet.

Ms. Rees: Did you know Goldie Miller?8

Ms. Putzel: I did not know her personally. Although I do not remember meeting her, I occasionally saw her rushing to the Courthouse. My recollection is that she was not a very tall woman and she had short black hair. She graduated from the University of Maryland School of Law in 1925, married Alvin Goodman, and opened a law office with her brother, Henry Miller.

I recently talked to her daughter-in-law, June Goodman. According to June, Goldie was one of twelve children. Her father died at the age of 37. As a child, Goldie wore handmade clothes to school and worked her way through law school as a cashier at Brager-Eisenberg's Department Store. Her husband had a law degree, but did not practice law. He was supportive of her law career. Goldie's husband was employed as an engineer at the old Baltimore Gas and Electric Company. Goldie had two children, Leonard Goodman, a retired lawyer

7 Interviewer's Note: In 1927, Henrietta Stonestreet was one of the founders of the Women's Bar Association of Maryland and served as its first president. She was the founder in 1949 of the International Federation of Women Lawyers.

8 Interviewer's Note: Goldie Rose Miller Goodman (1902-1996) was a 1925 graduate of the University of Maryland School of Law. She practiced law with her brother, Henry Miller, and was a busy trial lawyer, specializing in criminal defense. Although she married Alvin Goodman in 1929, she continued to practice law as "Goldie Miller".
now living in Florida, and Bruce Goodman, an attorney still practicing in Maryland.

Goldie was a litigator, which was somewhat unusual for a woman lawyer in those days. My friend, retired Judge Elsbeth Levy Bothe, practiced criminal law before she became a judge and she characterized Goldie as a "hard ball" player.

Ms. Rees: Did you know Rose Zetzer? 9

Ms. Putzel: I had the privilege of knowing Rose Zetzer from the time of my admission to the Bar in 1945 until shortly before her death in 1998, although I did not know her well. I had many opportunities to hear her speak, to observe her in action, to read about her in the local media, and to disagree with her in matters of strategy and tactics (but not goals).

Rose was born in 1904, the daughter of Russian immigrants. She grew up in Baltimore, graduated from Eastern High School in 1921, and was among the first women to attend the University of Maryland. She graduated from the University of Maryland School of Law in 1925, when I was two or three years old.

She was a small woman of medium build and short dark hair. Rose had a sharp tongue and a penchant for publicity. She never married and lived with (and cared for) her mother until her mother's death. Rose was a very gracious lady — kind, courteous, and polite (unless she was riled up at which point she fought like a good soldier).

Rose founded her own law firm along with Anna Carton, the first all-woman law firm in Maryland. She was a strong advocate who labored hard for the right of women to serve on juries. The privilege to serve on a jury was finally granted to women in 1946, six months before Rose became the first woman admitted to the Maryland State Bar Association. 10

9 Interviewer's Note: Rose Zetzer (1904-1998) was a 1925 graduate of the University of Maryland School of Law. She marched with the suffragettes as a child, which led to her decision to become an attorney when she grew up. Zetzer was trained as a stenographer and after she was admitted to the Bar, she could not get hired as an attorney. (The law firms were willing to hire her as a stenographer.) Zetzer was the first woman allowed to join the Maryland State Bar Association in 1946. (She had been trying for admission since 1927.) In 1940, Rose Zetzer and Anna Carton formed the first all female law firm in Maryland. The firm later expanded to include Lottie Friedler and LaRue Parker and did not dissolve until the 1960's. Most of their clients were males. She practiced until she retired in the early 1990's. She died in 1998 at age 94.

10 Maryland was the last state in the United States to admit women to its state bar association. Rose Zetzer was admitted on October 22, 1946.

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One of Rose’s most notable cases involved the Marjorie Cook Foundation. Rose became involved, both as a friend and a lawyer, with Marjorie Cook, daughter of a successful local lawyer who died leaving half of his estate outright to his son and the other half of his estate to Marjorie to be held in trust. Marjorie arranged for Rose to draw her Will leaving the bulk of her estate in trust to be used to “address the gap between women graduating from law school and the few women in formal leadership positions at the top of their profession” and to “further the cause of inequality for women in civil and economic rights”.

In 1968, through the Marjorie Cook Foundation, Rose was able to fund successful litigation to enable the first woman in Maryland to ride a racehorse as a jockey. In 2002, four years after Rose’s death, the University of Maryland established the Women Leadership and Equality Program.

Ms. Rees: Has the Program been successful?

Ms. Putzel: Since the Program began in 2009, there have been 32 Rose Zetzer fellows. Rose would have been pleased and proud.

Ms. Rees: When did Rose Zetzer die?

Ms. Putzel: She died in 1998 at the age of 94.

Ms. Rees: Where was Rose Zetzer’s law office located?

Ms. Putzel: Baltimore City. Later, H. LaRue Parke and Lottie Friedler joined the firm.

Ms. Rees: What do you know about Lottie Friedler?

Ms. Putzel: I had a case with Lottie not too long before she retired. On October 1, 2007, I had an opportunity to interview Lottie in her home, a few blocks from where I live. Lottie had lived alone for many years in a charming white shingle bungalow on Park Heights Avenue. When I interviewed her, she had an aide and was in a wheelchair. She was hard of hearing, but alert and a bit angry. (The source of Lottie’s ire was that her daughter and son-in-law wanted her to give up her home and move into a nursing facility.)

Lottie was born in Austria in 1913 and emigrated to the United States with her family. Lottie had once been married to M. Irvin Kemick, but they had divorced. She had one daughter and two grandchildren. Her daughter, Sandra (“Sandy”) Kemick, an Assistant State’s Attorney in Baltimore City, was married to Glen Klavens, also an attorney.
Lottie’s first career was as a teacher. As Lottie told the story, she fell during a field trip with her class, got dirty, and decided she didn’t like teaching. Her father, who was a barber, told a customer that his daughter was an unhappy young woman. The customer happened to be the Dean of the University of Baltimore’s School of Law. The Dean said, “Send her down to the law school and I’ll let her sit in on a class.” Lottie liked what she saw and enrolled in law school.

Ms. Rees: When did Lottie go to law school?

Ms. Putzel: It would have been in the 1930’s. I joined the Women’s Bar Association in 1945 right after I graduated law school. By that time, Rose Zetzer and Anna Carton had already formed their law firm. Lottie was actively practicing law when I passed her at the Courthouse in 2000.

One anecdote that Lottie shared with me when I interviewed her was that a legendary kingmaker in Baltimore politics had told her she could be a judge if she had sex with him. (Lottie never became a judge). She died August 13, 2008.

Ms. Rees: What do you remember about LaRue Parke?

Ms. Putzel: I remember LaRue Parke as a very attractive brunette who always wore big hats. Unfortunately, before she had an opportunity to build her reputation as a lawyer, she met an untimely death. A Baltimore Sun newspaper article noted that LaRue Parke had been a dress model and had sung on the radio as a child. According to the article, she still hoped to write a hit song. Another Baltimore Sun article dated April 8, 1947, was headlined, “Portias May, But Don’t, Wear Their Hats in City Courts”. LaRue Parke, then President of the Women’s Bar Association, is quoted as saying, “When I first became a member of the Bar, I sought guidance from older women attorneys. They told me I was not expected to wear a hat in court, but there was no law against it”. The anonymous writer ended the article by saying, “...nor, apparently is there likely to be”. LaRue Parke was President of the Women’s Bar Association of Maryland in 1946.

Ms. Rees: When you were admitted to the Bar in 1945, there were 2,000 attorneys in the State of Maryland. Do you have any idea how many of those 2,000 attorneys were women?

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11 Interviewer’s Note: Anna Carton was president of the Women’s Bar Association of Maryland in 1938 and Rose Zetzer was president of the Women’s Bar Association of Maryland in 1940.
Ms. Putzel: Not exactly. In 1936, there were 30 members of the Women’s Bar Association. In 1945, there were 60 members of the Women’s Bar Association. (The increase was due to the law schools opening up to women during the World War II years.)

Ms. Rees: Who were some of the women who went to law school when you did in the 1940’s during the World War II years?

Ms. Putzel: Besides myself, I know of Mary Arabian, Annarose Sleeth Bowers, Shirley Brannock Jones, Elsbeth Levy Bothe, Frances Knopf, and Dorothy Jackson Miller. (See Figure #11.)

Ms. Rees: Tell me about Mary Arabian.12

Ms. Putzel: Mary was my best friend. I met her in law school. In her early twenties, Mary was a petite young woman with long, wavy black hair, large beautiful big eyes, an aquiline nose, and an olive complexion. As a teenager, I knew Mary’s cousin, Ara Kachadourian, and his family. Ara is a fine artist. On my walls are several watercolors of historic Baltimore City given to Bill and I by Mary, painted and signed by Ara.

Ms. Rees: What do you know about Mary’s childhood?

Ms. Putzel: Mary, like me, was an only child. Her parents were Armenian and the family moved from Washington, D.C. to Baltimore when Mary was very young. She attended public schools and graduated from Eastern High School. Mary loved music. At one time, she aspired to be an opera singer, she sang in her church choir, and she considered a career in music. She also considered a career as a doctor, but was so inspired by reading about lawyers, particularly Clarence Darrow, that she opted for law school.

Ms. Rees: Did you and Mary become close in law school?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. Mary and I studied together in law school. We used to go to Miller Bros. (a nationally famous seafood restaurant) for dinner after we finished studying. We both used to order chicken lobsters, small lobsters with teeny

12 Interviewer’s Note: Mary Arabian (1920-2002) graduated from the University of Maryland School of Law in 1944. She worked for a real estate company and then as an Assistant City Solicitor before becoming a law partner of William Donald Schaefer (who went on to become Mayor of Baltimore City and then Governor of Maryland). In 1953, she served as president of the Women’s Bar Association of Maryland. In 1961, she became the first woman judge on Baltimore City’s old municipal court (lower trial court). She served as a judge for thirty years.
weenie claws. Mary spent probably about half an hour working her way through those teeny claws. Maybe that was a carryover from her days of wanting to be a surgeon.

Ms. Rees: Describe Mary Arabian's career.

Ms. Putzel: Attorneys William Donald Schaefer (later President of the Baltimore City Council, Mayor of Baltimore City, and Governor of Maryland), Mary Arabian, and Annarose Sleeth Bowers all worked in the Baltimore City Land Records Office searching titles. In December 1950, the month Bill and I opened our first law office, we attended the opening of Schaefer, Waltjen, and Arabian. (Mary never married and I have always felt that she was in love with Donald Schaefer.)

After a few years of an unremarkable law practice, primarily spent searching titles, Mary became one of the first female Assistant City Solicitors and one of the first Assistant Attorney Generals. In 1961, she was the first woman appointed as a judge of the Municipal Court (lower trial court). During the traffic scandals, Mary had a reputation as a judge who was unreachable.

Ms. Rees: What were the traffic scandals?

Ms. Putzel: Some of the judges were accepting bribes.

Ms. Rees: How many women were on the Bench when Mary Arabian became a judge?

Ms. Putzel: She was the first woman on what was then the Municipal Court (lower trial court) and was the second woman appointed to what was then the Supreme Bench of Baltimore City (higher trial court).

Ms. Rees: Were you present at Mary Arabian's swearing-in?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. Along with Norman Ramsey (federal judge on the United States District Court of Maryland) and Lawrence Rodowsky (appellate judge on the Maryland Court of Appeals), I had the privilege of robbing and escorting Mary to the Bench on that memorable day in September 1974.

Ms. Rees: What other positions did Mary Arabian hold?

Ms. Putzel: She was President of the University of Maryland School of Law Alumni Association from 1959-1960.

Ms. Rees: Did you ever travel with Mary?
Ms. Putzel: Yes. Bill was vice-president of Temple Oheb Shalom Congregation, so we decided it was time to take a trip to Israel. Both Bill and I had been raised in Reform Jewish families. Neither of us had been inculcated as Zionists, although, as a child, I did walk with my friends from door to door collecting for the Jewish National Fund. In July 1974, before Mary’s installation, the three of us visited Israel on a TWA Getaway vacation. (Mary was a Methodist, so she was visiting the Holy Land). We had a great trip. We had dinner at the home of Fred Weisgal, a Baltimore lawyer, and his wife, Jean, good friends of Mary who had moved to Israel. We toured the country and we were amazed at what had been accomplished with so little space and resources.

Ms. Rees: When did Mary Arabian die?

Ms. Putzel: She died in 2002. Her obituary in the Baltimore Sun recounted that:

> It was in criminal cases that Judge Arabian could occasionally add a humane touch at a time of pathos – like the case in 1984 when a convicted rapist-robber about to be sentenced decried the fairness of his trial and proclaimed his innocence, saying at one point that he didn’t want to cry because he [was] a man. Judge Arabian replied, “There’s nothing wrong with crying, for a man, for anybody.” She then sentenced him to life plus thirty years.

Ms. Rees: You said that Mary Arabian was the second woman appointed to the then Supreme Bench of Baltimore City. Who was the first woman?

Ms. Putzel: The first woman appointed to the Supreme Bench of Baltimore City was Shirley Braddock Jones.

Ms. Rees: Tell me about Shirley Brannock Jones. ¹³

Ms. Putzel: When I first met Shirley, she was an attractive young woman with short, dark hair, a slim figure, and horn-rimmed glasses. She enjoyed a stellar career. She is an amazing woman.

¹³ Interviewer’s Note: Shirley Brannock Jones (1925- ) graduated from the University of Baltimore School of Law in 1946. She served as president of the Women’s Bar Association of Maryland in 1954. Before becoming a judge, she worked as an Assistant City Solicitor and an Assistant Attorney General. She was the first woman appointed as a state trial court judge on the Supreme Bench of Baltimore City where she served from 1961-1979. In May 1982, President Jimmy Carter nominated her for a seat on the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland where she served as a federal judge until her resignation in December 1982.
Ms. Rees: Did Judge Jones go to law school with you?

Ms. Putzel: No. She went to the University of Baltimore School of Law. She may have been a year or two behind me in law school. She went to law school at night and worked as a secretary during the day. She paid her own tuition and she paid her parents for room and board. She once said, "My parents encouraged me, but didn’t try to mold me. I passed the bar exam, but didn’t practice much law because there were few opportunities for women lawyers in those days. The law firms were simply not hiring women”.

Ms. Rees: What kind of work did Shirley Jones do before she became a judge?

Ms. Putzel: In 1952, she was appointed Assistant City Solicitor. From 1958 to 1959, she was an Assistant Attorney General. She then served as a judge on the Orphan’s Court before being appointed to the Supreme Bench of Baltimore City.

Ms. Rees: Was Judge Jones elevated to a higher court?

Ms. Putzel: That’s an interesting story. She was appointed to the Federal District Court, but she didn’t stay long. She retired very young. Shirley was highly regarded for her judicial temperament and her great sense of humor. She was a role model for young women entering the legal profession. Shirley was originally from the Eastern Shore of Maryland. I spoke to Shirley at a Maryland State Bar Association annual meeting that is held every year on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. I asked her why she had retired so young and disappointed so many people. She said, “I didn’t want to move on. I liked trial work. I didn’t want to be elevated to the federal appellate bench. I didn’t need the money, I was happily married, we had no children, and I didn’t need the stress.”

Ms. Rees: Did she ever comment publicly about her decision to resign?

Ms. Putzel: Shortly before her retirement she said, “I’ve had 23 years in the judiciary. I feel honored to have been on State and Federal benches. I have no aspiration for appellate work, which is the only way to go from here. I like trial work and real people. I have gone as far as I can and I am fully satisfied. I was fortunate to come along at a time when the value of women lawyers was finally becoming fully appreciated. I haven’t had children, but I have nothing but admiration for the modern female lawyer.”

Ms. Rees: Tell me about Annarose Catherine Sleeth Bowers.

Ms. Putzel: Among the women in my law school classes, Annarose was, without a doubt, the smartest. Self-effacing, soft-spoken with dark hair, even features
and a beautiful smile, she never considered herself attractive. According to the brochure distributed at her Memorial Service, Annarose was supposed to have said at age six that she wanted to become a lawyer because “attorneys have to know everything”. She came close in law school as co-editor of the Maryland Law Review and as a member of the Order of the Coif, the highest legal Honor Society. She graduated from the University of Maryland School of Law in 1944.

She began her law career as a title abstractor for Real Estate Title Company while she was still in law school. Exceptionally bright and talented, Annarose rapidly developed a widely recognized expertise in real estate law and later in condominium law. Through the years I practiced law, I contacted Annarose whenever I had a Real Property question, certain that I would receive the correct answer in language I could understand.

In 1957, when she was in her mid-thirties, Annarose met and married Henry Kenneth Bowers (“Ken”). I remember her telling us that before she married Ken, she had reminded him of her age and hoped that she would still be able to have a family. They had three wonderful sons. Annarose left the practice of law for a few years while her children were young. They took family camping trips in a trailer, travelling up and down the East Coast. Annarose and Ken spent a month studying geography in India. She was also deeply involved in genealogy, researching her family history back to the American Revolution.

In 1973, she was called back to Title Guarantee Company for a special assignment, which morphed into her attaining the rank of Assistant Vice-President. However, she was told not to expect that she would ever make General Counsel. She also told the story about being asked to explain a complicated railroad right-of-way issue to B & O Railroad’s counsel. By way of introduction to the B & O Railroad’s counsel, her colleague commented, “She looks very feminine, but she knows what she is talking about”.

Ken predeceased her by about a year. At the Memorial Service, I had the privilege of meeting a daughter-in-law, a child psychologist, to whom I gave an autographed copy of Dr. Leo Kanner’s early book, “In Defense of Mothers”, written years before Dr. Spock wrote his “Bible”.

Annarose was an interesting, multi-faceted personality. In her spare time, she enjoyed quilting, crewelwork, and embroidery. She agreed to help me with the writing of my book, but, unfortunately, I moved too slowly. She died on February 20, 2009, survived by her three sons, two daughter-in-laws, and three grandchildren.
Ms. Rees: Tell me about Elsbeth Levy Bothe.\textsuperscript{14}

Ms. Putzel: Beth and I were friends for over 60 years and she was one of the most interesting people I have ever known. We met in 1952, shortly after she was admitted to the Bar. A group of women lawyers got together for lunch every Tuesday at Marty Welch’s Restaurant on Fayette Street, catty corner from the Baltimore City Courthouse. We all belonged to the Women’s Bar Association until Jeanette Wolman was accepted as the first woman member of the Bar Association of Baltimore City in 1957.

After law school, Beth went to work at the Legal Aid Bureau. She then practiced law as a criminal defense attorney, first as an assistant public defender and then in private practice, until she became the third woman (after Shirley Jones and Mary Arabian) to be appointed to the Supreme Bench of Baltimore City. I was a co-sponsor of Beth when she was installed on February 24, 1978.

She was an active member of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) where she represented John Waters, the world-famous movie director and producer, who became a lifelong friend. In his blog dated March 6, 2009, John Waters said, “I met her when I got arrested for conspiracy to commit indecent exposure for making the film \textit{Mondo Trasho}. I called the ACLU. She happened to answer the phone and she got me out of jail. I didn’t see her again until one of my students at Patuxent\textsuperscript{15} prison, where I taught film, had a retrial for murder and I went to court to support him. The judge was Elsbeth.”

As an ACLU member, Beth marched in Mississippi during the Civil Rights Era. She was a “character” on and off the Bench who collected chess sets, skulls, and books on murder. She was the first female judge in Maryland to handle criminal trials concerning serious crimes such as murder and rape.

\textsuperscript{14} Interviewer’s Note: Elsbeth Levy Bothe (1927-2013) graduated from the University of Maryland School of Law in 1952. She was active in the civil rights movement in Mississippi, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the labor movement in Baltimore. She practiced law as a criminal defense attorney until she was appointed a judge on the Circuit Court for Baltimore City. She was the first female judge in Baltimore City to handle serious criminal cases such as murders and rapes. Judge Bothe served on the Bench from 1978-1996.

\textsuperscript{15} Interviewer’s Note: The Patuxent Institution (“Patuxent”) is located in Jessup, Maryland. Opened in 1955, it is a State facility that was created to house Maryland’s most dangerous criminal offenders who needed psychotherapeutic treatment. In 1994, Patuxent shifted its core treatment program to service youthful offenders. People incarcerated at Patuxent serve indeterminate sentences.
My friendship with Beth through the years was both professional and social. I remember her wedding to Bert in the atrium of a friend's new home with the sun shining brightly and a peacock strutting around. For some unknown reason, I found myself thinking, “this isn’t going to last”. Her marriage to Bert lasted until Bert’s death many years later.

Beth had a houseboat called, “The Jubilee”, which she kept docked at her summer home on the Severn River. One beautiful summer Sunday, she invited Bill and I and our then 10 year-old son for an afternoon outing and dinner. Everything was delightful until 6 P.M., 7 P.M., 8 P.M. without dinner. We hesitated to say anything, but our little boy was getting very restless and irritable. She finally lit the grill at about 9:30 P.M., assuring dinner by 10 P.M.

After retiring from the Bench, she bravely battled multiple sclerosis for many years (while continuing to lead an active life) until she succumbed to a stroke in 2013. At her Memorial Service, attended by hundreds of people, I sat up front next to John Waters while we both waited our turn to speak about our remarkable mutual friend.

Ms. Rees: Tell me about Frances Knopf.

Ms. Putzel: I knew Frances Knopf because she was part of the group of women lawyers in Baltimore City who had lunch together on Tuesdays. She graduated from the University of Maryland School of Law in 1948. However, I know very little about her.

Ms. Rees: Tell me about Dorothy Jackson Miller.16

Ms. Putzel: I knew her in law school. The law school was an eight-block walk from the Courthouse in Baltimore City. Most of us worked afternoons either in the Courthouse searching titles or clerking for lawyers or judges. After class, we usually meandered across town together, stopping along the way for lunch. One day, Dorothy Jackson, a devout Catholic, had half finished her hamburger when she suddenly remembered it was Friday. Very upset, she exclaimed, “Why didn’t you tell me?”

16 Interviewer’s Note: Dorothy Jackson Miller (1924-2005) graduated in 1945 from the University of Maryland and its law school in a combined accelerated 4 year program. She passed the Maryland Bar exam before the age of 21 and practiced law at her Parkville (Baltimore County, Maryland) office for over 60 years. She was the first woman elected to the Maryland House of Delegates where she served in the 1950’s.
Dorothy was a pretty, curly haired blond with a big smile. She was one of the students in the combined program merging the last year of college with the first year of law school. During and after law school, she invited her law school friends to her family’s summer home on the water for steamed crabs and corn on the cob.

Dorothy proudly told us that she was born and educated in Baltimore County where she had attended school in a one-room schoolhouse. Always interested in politics, Dorothy became the first woman elected to the Maryland House of Delegates where she served two terms. In her final year as a legislator, she is quoted as saying of Annapolis that “...there is too much politics down here and not enough statesmanship”. (Some things never change.)

One of my few attempts at playing Cupid was unsuccessful when I arranged a blind date for Dorothy and my friend, Dick Sonnenfeldt, whom I had met at the Kanners’ home in the late 1940’s. Several years later, Dorothy married C. Edward Miller, proprietor of an art school in Baltimore City. They had three daughters and a son.

I was honored when Judge John Fader of the Circuit Court for Baltimore County appointed me conservator to wind down Dorothy’s law practice and appointed me personal representative of Dorothy’s estate. (Dorothy died in 2005 of pancreatic cancer.) The main portion of her estate, including the home and the business properties, had been in the joint names of Dorothy and her husband. Always interested in helping people, she’d often barter her services for those who could not afford to pay. By the time of her death, the primary value of her law practice was “good will”. I was successful in finding a young, newly minted lawyer (whom I had interviewed for the Character Committee) to purchase her practice for a nominal amount.

Dorothy’s obituary stated, in part:

Mrs. Miller enjoyed preparing and presiding over family Sunday dinners. She was an accomplished seamstress and collected marble eggs, silver spoons, and antiques. She was an active member of the “Has Beens, Wannabees and Never Wazzas”, an organization of Baltimore politicians, legislators, judges, and government workers that meets at Peerce’s Plantation, a Dulaney Valley Restaurant.

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17 Interviewer’s Note: Annapolis is the capitol of Maryland. The Maryland Legislature and the United States Naval Academy are located in Annapolis.
Ms. Rees: You mentioned that when you started working at the Legal Aid Bureau in the late 1940's, there had already been a female chief attorney. Who was that?

Ms. Putzel: Her name was Lee Snyder. She was a graduate of the University of Maryland School of Law. I only remember her vaguely because she moved to Virginia and practiced law there. I do remember her as a rather attractive woman with dark hair.

Ms. Rees: How long did you serve on the Maryland Equal Rights Commission?


Ms. Rees: Why didn't the Maryland Equal Rights Commission get off the ground?

Ms. Putzel: Maryland ratified a state Equal Rights Amendment, but there wasn't enough support in the other states for it to become the law of the land.

Ms. Rees: What did the Maryland Commission on the Status of Women accomplish?

Ms. Putzel: Not much. We supported and sponsored legislation, which did not get passed. It was very discouraging to me. My colleagues said, "It was helpful in consciousness-raising", which didn't convince me. However, I kept with it and I evidently made an impression. A few years ago, I was flipping through the internet and I saw a notation that e-Bay was advertising a piece of history for sale. When I checked it out, the piece of history turned out to be a photograph of me with an article entitled, "Wife, Mother, Lawyer". It was dated July 10, 1971. (See Figure #12 & Figure #13.)

Ms. Rees: Wife, mother, lawyer in that order?

Ms. Putzel: Yes.

Ms. Rees: Would you have put it in that order? Well, you don't have to answer that...

Ms. Putzel: I am not going to answer that.

Ms. Rees: How did the article come about?
Ms. Putzel: In 1971, Bill and I were invited to speak at a seminar at Notre Dame. The seminar was sponsored by the Maryland Commission on the Status of Women that had been established in the 1950's with Jeanette Wolman as its first chair.

Ms. Rees: What was the subject of your talk?

Ms. Putzel: I spoke about the problems of the working wife and mother. In those days, it was unusual. I took a very small amount of time off when my son was born. I spoke about how difficult it was to practice law on a part-time basis, but how lucky I was because I lived with my law partner. If the baby was sick and I had a case coming up, Bill would either stay home with the baby or try the case for me. The whole secret was to learn the art of compromise. I said you could be a good lawyer, but not the best, when you also had a child growing up. It was interesting because I said that early in my talk and, in closing, I said I would advise a woman with a family to tread water for a while and keep her legal skills in condition. I said when the last child leaves, she'll be ready to go back to work. I also said, keep your priorities straight and realize that you may not be doing any one thing as well as it theoretically could be done. A sense of humor helps, too. I still stand by what I said.

Ms. Rees: So, do you think you were able to do it back then because your husband was willing to co-parent with you?

Ms. Putzel: I don't think there is any question about it.

Ms. Rees: Getting back to the picture that accompanied the article and was for sale on e-Bay, did you buy a copy and how much did it cost?

Ms. Putzel: It was on sale for $13.99. I didn't buy a copy because I already had one. I don't know if anyone else bought a copy.

Ms. Rees: How did you feel about the idea of establishing a family court in Maryland?

Ms. Putzel: It was long over due. The Groner Commission, headed by Beverly Groner, was the first to suggest that a Family Court be set up. This was in the early 1980's. We didn't get a Family Court in Maryland until much later.

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18 Interviewer's Note: Notre Dame is a Baltimore Catholic high school.

19 Interviewer's Note: Beverly Groner (1912-2003) graduated from American University School of Law in 1959. She practiced law with her husband, Samuel B. Groner, for 40 years until she retired in 1999. She served as chair of the Maryland Governor's Commission on Domestic
Ms. Rees: When were you President of the Women’s Bar Association of Maryland?

Ms. Putzel: I was President of the Women’s Bar Association from 1952-1953. I believe I am the oldest former president still living.

Ms. Rees: What impact do you think women lawyers and judges have had on the legal profession?

Ms. Putzel: I shy away from generalizations. I am a strong individualist. I think every person is unique. If I were to generalize, I think women lawyers and judges have had a good impact. We made the legal profession better by making it more personal. There is an emphasis today on the lawyer-client relationship – I think women lawyers and judges are better at interpersonal relationships.

Ms. Rees: Going beyond the legal profession, what impact do you think women lawyers and judges have had on society in general?

Ms. Putzel: I think they have improved it. Again, I feel very strongly that by and large women are much better at relating to other people, both to other women and to men.

Ms. Rees: Have you noticed any changes in the role of women in the legal profession during your career?

Ms. Putzel: Of course. When I came to the Bar, after people got their first shock of a woman being on the other side, there was no problem. But I know women lawyers aren’t satisfied. I have often said they wanted equal rights and once they got equal rights, they wanted special privileges. I still go with that statement, but I think women lawyers seem to be doing a good job on the whole. If we had more female heads of state, we might not be in the mess we are in now in the world.

Ms. Rees: What kind of special privileges do you mean?

Ms. Putzel: They wanted special hours to accommodate their personal lives, including childcare, and at the same time to get equal benefits. They wanted to be on a partnership track even though they wanted to stay home and take care of

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Relations (locally referred to as “the Groner Commission”), which made recommendations that led to the passage in 1978 of the Marital Property Act. The Marital Property Act reformed the law on property disposition in Maryland divorces. The Groner Commission went on to recommend sweeping changes in the awarding of alimony, which became law in 1980.

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their children. I think you have to make choices and compromise, which is what I said 40 years ago. Life is full of compromises...

Ms. Rees: True. And life is not fair...

Ms. Putzel: Yes, and life is not fair. Have you seen the cartoon that I have that says, “How old do you have to be before you find out that life isn’t fair?”

Ms. Rees: When the tape was off, you mentioned something about Betty Friedan, the author, and then we got sidetracked.

Ms. Putzel: Yes. I didn’t read her book, The Feminine Mystique, in 1963 when it came out because I thought I was living it. When I did read the book years later, I agreed with myself that I had been living it. Betty Friedan’s main point was that educated women were wasting their education. I didn’t waste mine – I feel good about that.

Ms. Rees: When you look back on your career, what do you think were your greatest accomplishments?

Ms. Putzel: Since my grandson, Drew, died, I have changed my approach from “accomplishments” to “relationships”.

Ms. Rees: That’s interesting. What relationships are you most proud of?

Ms. Putzel: No. No. “Accomplishments” is o.k. I think probably the fact that I have made a difference in people’s lives, as the many letters from former clients I have received attest. The letters say I was there for them when they most needed it or something like that.

Ms. Rees: Right. Right.

Ms. Putzel: I think doing Family Law gives you a considerable feeling of accomplishment because you are personally involved in people’s lives. You have to have a feeling for people to practice Family law.

Ms. Rees: And you make a difference in people’s lives...

Ms. Putzel: Yes.

Ms. Rees: If you were giving advice to a young woman who was thinking about going to law school, what would you say?
Ms. Putzel: Good luck. Forget it.

Ms. Rees: Really?

Ms. Putzel: Yes. Not based on my experience, based on what the field is today.

Ms. Rees: In what way?

Ms. Putzel: When I came to the Bar, it was unethical to advertise. Today, the practice of law is commercialized. People are finding their lawyer on the internet. With the advent of Legal Zoom and other websites, more people are handling their own legal matters. Many people simply can’t afford to hire an attorney. I think it’s a different world today and it’s governed more by technology than anything else. Also, I don’t think there’s such a thing as “Ethics” in today’s practice of law. I wouldn’t want to practice law today.

Ms. Rees: So, are you saying the law is not a good career goal for women today?

Ms. Putzel: I don’t know what it is. I don’t understand today’s world. It is overwhelmed by technology. A few nights ago, my son, my daughter-in-law, and I were out celebrating my 92nd birthday. The restaurant was dark. I wanted to read a poem by Robert Louis Stevenson about the loss of a child, but there wasn’t enough light for me to read by. My son pulled out his Smartphone and made it into a flashlight. It is unreal to me.

Ms. Rees: What advice would you give a young lawyer starting out today?

Ms. Putzel: When I left my job at Johns Hopkins to go to law school, the Director said to me, “Some people have a star and some people don’t. I hope you find yours.” I would say to a young lawyer starting out today, “Be honest and be yourself.” That’s all.
Illustrations

Figure #11: Special luncheon for women graduates of the University of Maryland School of Law held on October 4, 2001. Standing (L – R): Iris Rosenblatt ’59; Mary Katherine Scheeler ’53; Emily Rody ’69; Dean Karen Rothenberg; Kathryn Lovedahl ’67; Frances Knopf ’48; Anne Kramer ’63. Seated (R – L): Suzanne Sherwood ’53; Annarose Sleeth Bowers ’44; Dorothy Jackson Miller ’45; Constance Putzel ’45.

Figure #12: Picture accompanying Baltimore Sun newspaper article dated July 10, 1971 titled “Wife, Mother, Lawyer”.

Figure #13: Baltimore Sun newspaper article dated July 10, 1971 titled “Wife, Mother, Lawyer”.

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