

LAURA LEGGE TRANSCRIPT

LAURA LEGGE INTERVIEW #1

DATE: JULY 6, 2004

PLACE: LEGGE AND LEGGE, BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS

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**MEDIA: 2 MINI-DISKS APPROX. 58:23 AND 13:42 MINUTES IN LENGTH
AND ONE MINI-CASSETTE OF SAME.**

AF This is Alison Forrest. Treasurers' Interviews, Law Society of Upper Canada. Today is the sixth of July, 2004. First interview with Mrs. Laura Legge.

....

AF Could I have your full name, and date of birth and place of birth, please?

LL Yes. My full name is Laura Louise Legge. Date of birth January the 27th, 1923.

LL What was the other one?

AF And your place of birth?

LL Place of birth. I was born in a farm house, on a farm, in southwestern Ontario near Tillsonburg, Ontario.

AF And where is Tillsonburg? What would be the closest large town?

LL It's about forty miles southeast of London.

AF Right, right. You were born there: how long did you live there?

LL I lived there until I was 17 when I left home to go to university.

AF Oh, right, great. How many brothers and sisters do you have?

LL I had well, there were seven of us but one child died in infancy at the age of eight months. And I had a brother who was drowned when he was 20. I was 17, no I was 18: he was two years older than I.

AF Right, and--

LL So five of us survived: one brother and three sisters.

AF Right. And where were you in birth order?

LL In the middle.

AF In the middle. And what was the range of ages?

LL My older sister was six years older than I, and my youngest sister was oh dear I guess nine years, eight, eight or nine years younger than I.

AF So there's quite a gap between—

LL Yes.

AF Yes. How old was your father when you were born?

LL When I was born?

AF Yes.

LL [Quietly] He was born in 1888 : thirty-four.

AF Thirty-four. And how old was your mother?

LL [Pause] Twenty-six.

AF So there was quite a, I guess eight years difference?

LL Yes.

AF And what did your father do for a living?

LL My father was a farmer.

AF And what did he farm?

LL I beg your pardon?

AF What did he farm?

LL He was a dairy farmer. But in those years farmers were always general farmers. He had fourteen acres of wonderful apple trees. When I was very small they used to ship apples to England. And they really had a mixed farm. And my grandfather, who of course gave my father his farm, was-- I didn't realize it at the time, he was an incredible man. He was born in 1856, and his parents were-- He was born two weeks after his mother got off a sailing ship in Port Hope--

AF Oh, goodness! [laughs]

LL --and in 1856, and my grandfather was quite remarkable. He started to farm (the family lived around Lakefield) but he went down to southwest Ontario. He bought a farm (I don't know where he got the money, I guess he worked and saved), and he was one of the first members of the Holstein Friesen Association of Canada. He raised purebred cattle. He had wonderful cattle. And he was just a remarkable man. When his sons married, he gave them each a farm fully-equipped, with the beginning of a herd of cattle. When his daughters were married, he gave them each a thousand dollars which in those years would buy a farm. [laughs] He was quite a remarkable man, and I knew my grandfather very well, because when I grew up on the farm that he had, he had 200 acres of purebred Holsteins. He was an amazing man.

AF Did he learn about cattle breeding from --?

LL I have no idea. He was just-- I don't know where. His father, who had grown up in England, of course, and emigrated-- I don't know.

AF This was your grandfather?

LL My grandfather. My great-grandfather emigrated, yes, in 1856.

AF So your father was a farmer. What about your mother, did she work at all before--?

LL My mother, my mother's family emigrated from Cornwall in England, I think in 1908. My grandfather came out with his-- I think he brought nine children and my grandmother, and when he arrived he had enough money to buy a farm. And my grandfather, my maternal grandfather, was an extremely bright man with absolutely no sense about earning a living or investing money. [laughs] And he met somebody who sold him a farm for a thousand dollars and it was 40 acres of blow sand down in southwest down in Norfolk county that hadn't even been cleared. But it was typical of my grandfather who was a completely ingenuous gentleman. He had never, I gathered, we don't really know, but he had been born into one of those English families where you didn't work. And he married and had children and was a civil servant and he decided he was going-- He had crossed the ocean to the United States and Canada at least three times before he decided to bring his family out, so he knew. But he had-- A cousin of mine did a family history and one of the most amusing parts was that our grandfather, our maternal grandfather, was a genius: no matter what he started, it lost money. But anyway, that is not really fair. He had nine daughters who were absolutely beautiful -- my mother was, and her sisters -- and they all did, you know, they were all happily married and brought up children.

AF Yes, so he was successful. Yes.

[Laughter]

LL My mother was exceedingly bright. She had little formal education, but--. Both of my parents were actually very well educated. They read all the time.

AF So self-educated?

LL Yes, I grew up in a house that was full of books. And when I was seven, my mother -- I was reading *A Tale of Two Cities* -- and my mother said "You're too young" and took it away from me, but I read it anyway. So we grew up in an atmosphere where the table, the conversation around our table at dinner was world affairs and politics. And they, my parents were involved in world affairs and politics. And they were actually, sort of the community leaders in--. They looked after everybody who was less fortunate.

AF Yes. Both your mother and father?

LL Yes.

AF Getting back to your mother: did she work before she was married?

LL No.

AF What about after she had married?

LL No, no.

AF As a farmer's wife, she would have assisted your father on the farm?

LL Well, she-- Not much, because she had children. One year after they were married my older daughter, my older sister was born. She ran the house.

AF Did she have assistance running the house?

LL Yes, yes.

AF So who helped her?

LL Yes. Well, they always had, as they were called "hired girls", in those years.

AF And what did they do?

LL Well, they helped my mother with the housework and with the children.

AF So, childcare and what about cooking and laundry: did they do those as well?

LL Well, my mother was a marvellous cook. She ran--

AF So she would have prepared the meals?

LL Oh yes.

AF The hired help: what kind of hours would they have worked?

LL [Laughs] I don't know. We didn't pay much attention. Everyone in those years on farms worked continually, or almost continuously from daylight until dark. Life wasn't easy. We didn't have all of the modern conveniences that they have today.

AF Did you have electricity?

LL When I was twelve.

AF Twelve: so you remember that?

LL I remember that very well.

AF And what did you have before that: did you have gas light at all?

LL No, no.

AF Did you have candles, kerosene?

LL No, you had, stoves, you had wood-burning stoves and you cooked with wood-burning stoves.

AF And when you got electricity, was it just for lights or did you use it for--?

LL No, for everything. My mother immediately had a refrigerator and an electric stove. [laughs]

AF Good for her! [laughs] So, that was pretty early: that would be about 1935.

LL 1935. Yes, Yes, I can remember they were stringing the hydro wires along the road. And it was, it was really something.

AF So did the community along the road, your neighbours, have got it in as well, or was it just brought in for your family?

LL Oh, yes.

AF Everybody?

LL Yes.

AF So she [your mother] got a fridge. Did she get any other electrical appliances to help her: like a vacuum, a washing machine maybe?

LL No. Oh yes! A washing machine, of course! [laughs] I'd forgotten about that. Absolutely.

AF That was a pretty labour-intensive job before washing machines--?

LL Oh, absolutely.

AF Was it one with the wringer?

LL Yes.

AF Yes, at about the same time, when the power came on?

LL Yes, it was.

AF The hired help: was it live-in help?

LL Yes.

AF Was it just the one girl or woman helping?

LL Yes, that's right. Yes.

AF And what about your father: did he have help as well?

LL Yes, always. All the time on the farm.

AF Did they live in also, were they maybe couples?

LL But my grandfather had a very large house just beside us and they used to live there.

AF So they lived with your grandfather?

LL Yes.

AF These farms were adjacent?

LL Yes, they were.

AF What I wanted to ask you before was, when your grandfather gave your father and his siblings farms, were they from his own farm? Did he divide his own farm? Or were they adjacent farms?

LL No. My grandfather had a hundred acre farm, he bought the adjacent hundred acres and put that in my father's name. When my grandfather died in 1937, he left my father his farm so my father had 200, had the 200 acres, which they had farmed together, in any event.

AF Could you describe the house that you grew up in?

LL Well, it was typical of farm houses in those years. It had 5 or 6 bedrooms, and a huge farm kitchen, large sort of living room/dining room. The upstairs, you know, 4 bedrooms. It was-- There were 3 bedrooms downstairs and it was, you know-- Those houses, they are still the same: rooms here and there, and everywhere.

AF How old would the house have been? When would it have been built?

LL I don't know. Never thought of it. I suppose, my parents had put an addition on. I suppose the original house would have built, would have been built in the middle of the nineteenth century.

AF And what was it made out of?

LL All the houses in the country were made the same. All of the houses were wood siding. There was no brick. There was some brick I guess in the town, but there was no brick out on the farms.

AF How were the bedrooms used?

LL I beg your pardon?

AF How were the bedrooms used? Did you share a room with somebody?

LL Yes, usually. We had-- Well I can't-- I was pretty young when I had my own room. We all had our own rooms. We couldn't share rooms because we, we were marvellous siblings: we fought like cats!

[laughter]

LL So we had our own rooms. My brothers had the largest – there were two boys and four girls – and the boys had two beds in one large room, I remember. But we, I had my own room. I can't remember not having it, actually.

AF Yes, yes. And your clothing: was that store-bought clothing? Did you make any of your clothes when you were growing up?

LL No, my mother, she didn't sew. I can remember her having someone in who did sew. In those years I was the third girl, so I think I grew up with hand-me-downs from my older sisters. [laughs] You know, they would get something new and then a year later I would get it. [laughs]

AF Right, so their clothing was made by somebody who came in to make the clothes?

LL Some of it was, and some of it my mother bought.

AF Would this have been through a catalogue, or at a store in the town?

LL Well, I can't recall. That's a detail I don't remember. I suspect she went into the local town, she shopped and--

AF The name of the local town again?

LL Tillsonburg was the town where she used to shop, yes.

AF Was the closest?

LL Yes.

AF OK. Were you girls expected to help around the house when you were growing up?

LL Oh yes, absolutely.

AF What kind of jobs did you have?

LL Well, we had to help wash dishes when it was our turn. We had our chores. And there was a vegetable garden and I can remember in the summer we would have to go out and weed the garden, and--.

AF Was it a fairly substantial garden, because it was a big family?

LL Oh yes, it was. All the farmers had, grew a lot of their own vegetables and--

AF What kinds of vegetables did you have?

LL Potatoes, carrots, cabbage--

AF So, root vegetables?

LL Oh, yes.

AF Anything else?

LL I can't recall.

AF Right. You said you had orchards as well, so you would have had--

LL Oh yes, we had wonderful apple orchards.

AF What about your brothers: did they help around the house at all?

LL My brothers? Oh no, no, no. They were always out with my father.

AF So the girls worked in the house--

LL When we were little, of course, I can remember playing – I had one 2 years older and one 2 years younger – but when they got older, they helped my father.

AF Right, right. Your father: was he involved in raising the children, or was that something that your mother mostly did?

LL I don't know. We were very close to my father. He was a marvellous man and he was very much involved in local politics. He was the reeve of the township and all through the Depression in the thirties he looked after the welfare for the municipality.

AF Yes, yes.

LL He looked after the people who needed help.

AF You were on a dairy farm. Your family must have been tied to the farm: did you go away at all for holidays?

LL No, absolutely not. [laughs]

AF OK, getting back to meals again: did the whole family sit down to meals?

LL Yes.

AF You had a dining room and you would sit down there?

LL Yes, we sat around a huge table, all of us, and we had a marvellous time.

Now, you must understand that in 1930 there was-- In October 1929 there was a great economic crash, which I remember very well. And the 1930s were years of great poverty and we were very fortunate. My father did not lose his farm, but many people did. And I

remember this. My grandfather who had been, when I really think about it, he was a brilliant businessman, really. And so we had financial security. But in the thirties there was little money, because no one could sell anything. However, we were very fortunate: we were never cold, we were never hungry. We had all the essentials of life which people in the cities and towns did not have.

AF This is from raising your own food, in many ways?

LL Yes, farmers were very fortunate. But I can tell you, since I have been in Toronto -- And I think of one of the presidents of one of our very large corporations and he came in to see me and we started reminiscing, and he would be a little older than I -- his, most people of my generation came from farms, because that was, Ontario was still largely rural. And his parents had lost their farm. And I, there was a, they had a terrible time-- And his mother was the local schoolteacher and he managed to go to university on scholarships. And I can think of another fellow whose brother was one of our MPs and he and his brother were both lawyers here in Toronto. And one day were closing a real estate deal, this would be thirty years ago or more, and he said to me, and I had been at Western University together, and he said "do you remember the time I was, we had a public speaking course we had to take" and he said "do you remember the time I stood up to give my speech and the professor looked me and chastised me because I had on a red plaid shirt and no jacket"? And I can still see this farm boy standing there blushing crimson and the teacher saying to him "you're not properly dressed" and I felt and you know my heart went out to him, and I said "I remember, I do remember". And he said "that was the only shirt I owned". He was at university! [laughs] That's, those were the years, and they were very difficult. And Western University, where I went, nearly all of

us were there because we had won scholarships. There were two groups there: there were the children of the London wealthy, and those of us who had, mostly from rural Ontario and most of us were there because we had won scholarships.

AF Do you think your family was affected by the Depression, so you said you had--

LL No, not really. We had a very, a very nice home life. We always felt secure. And my parents were excellent: money was never an issue. They never talked about it. It didn't seem to matter much.

AF So you had no sense of--

LL No.

AF --that impacting on you? 1935 is generally considered to be the worst year of the Depression and yet that's the year that electricity came through, and that was the year you were buying appliances.

LL That's right. And that was the year I started to high school. At the age of twelve I started to high school. We had, we were seven miles from the nearest high school, and my father was determined that we would all be educated, and in the year 1935 there were four of us going seven miles to high school.

AF From your family?

LL Yes, and we had to drive the seven miles.

AF Right. So, did you have a family car?

LL Yes, we did.

AF And was it mandatory then to attend secondary school?

LL You had to go to school until you were fourteen.

AF You'd do at least your first two years of high school?

LL Well, that's right. There were all sorts of children there until they were 14 and then they, the family couldn't afford to send them. But my father, my father's rule was so long as we went to school and passed and wanted to go, well he, we had no choice. We all went until we finished high school. He would find the money to send us to school, and that was it.

AF So that was six years of secondary school?

LL No four years, five years of school. At the end of five years I was 17 and started to the University.

AF Right, what about your brothers and sisters: did they finish school?

LL Yes. My older brother, of course, well, he was drowned when he was twenty. So he had, he had finished high school. He had, the war was on and he had stayed at home and had worked for one year on the farm. The day before, the day after he was drowned he was scheduled to go to London, he was going to join the navy, and he was drowned at a Sunday school picnic. And my younger brother joined the air force and when he came back from overseas he went to veterinary college and then after two years he married and stayed home. At that stage my father had sold the family farm and had bought 500 acres north of Woodstock, and my brother was there farming with my father. My two sisters became nurses. The other sister worked for Bell Canada and got married and as a matter of fact her daughter, she had one daughter who taught high school, and her, one son, grandson now has his PhD in physics or something [inaudible]...

AF Could we perhaps go back – we just looked at your secondary education -- and I'd like to ask you about your earlier education. Did you learn how to read and write or do numbers before you went to school, primary school?

LL Yes, because we used to play school [laughs] and my older sisters would come home from school and teach me. And when I started to school I could actually read, and knew all my times tables, and I could spell and--

AF It was more like a game?

LL It was a game, yes.

AF Yes. How old were you when you did go to school?

LL I started to school when I was seven because we had to walk a mile and a half to school.

AF Yes, that's a good way.

LL But I only spent five years at public school because I kept skipping grades.

AF Right. Do you remember the school at all? How big it was?

LL Yes, I remember very well. It had two, there were two rooms, there were four-- Well, in the one room there were the last five grades, and in the first room you know starting at a kind of kindergarten. There were 50 students in each room and two teachers. One for, you know, one teacher for every fifty students. We all sat in rows and you could have heard a pin drop at any time because we were brought up in disciplined homes, and we were disciplined, and we respected our teachers, and it was very much a learning environment.

AF Do you remember the names of teachers?

LL Yes, I do.

AF And what were they?

LL My, in the junior school it was Miss Lucas, and in the senior school it was, oh, what in the world was--? You've got me!

[laughter]

LL I'll think of it in a minute.

AF And did you wear a uniform to school?

LL No. No.

AF Did you go home for lunch?

LL No, no. We took our lunch to school. School was from 9 to 4, with an hour for lunch. And we had two recesses in the morning and afternoon of 15 minutes, and if you talked you missed recess, and I think my record [laughs] was three months with no recess!

[laughter]

AF Having said you were highly disciplined!

[laughter]

AF So you liked talking in class! So, boys and girls went to school together?

LL Yes.

AF What subjects did you take?

LL In public school? We had very basics. We had grammar, we had, let me see, reading, writing, grammar every year, arithmetic, we had history every year, every year we had history all through school.

AF What type of history would that have been.?

LL We had Canadian history, we had British history. I think that's all we had in public school. But in high school every year we had history a starting with Ancient history, Canadian history, British history, European history.

AF A range of histories. So your primary school would have been the local school, so all the children in the district would have gone to that school?

LL That's right.

AF So a broad cross-section of kids. Mostly farmer's children?

LL Principally farmer's children. The little village where the school was located, you know, had about a hundred people. There were a few children of local merchants, their children, and there was still a blacksmith when I was a child. I can remember watching the blacksmith shoe horses.

AF Did you keep horses on the farm, as well?

LL Oh yes. My father had beautiful horses.

AF These were work horses?

LL Well, they were Percherons, they were beautiful horses. See my father raised purebred Percherons and used to sell teams. We used to [laughs], we used to ride them when he wasn't around. When I think of it, we would ride unbroken colts, barebacked: it's a wonder we weren't killed. But these horses were very intelligent. I think they knew we were just little [pause] pills that shouldn't have been doing it. But we certainly knew how to ride horses.

AF What about the disciplining the children, getting back to the school?

LL It was very strict. The girls, the principal of the school, who was the male, had a strap, and I can still see it: it was about this long [demonstrates length with hands],

and about 2 inches wide, and if the boys misbehaved they were strapped on the hands.

The girls were never strapped.

AF How were the girls disciplined?

LL We were disciplined by losing our recess. Which I did habitually.

[laughter]

AF Returning to your secondary school experience. You said it was seven miles away and you drove to get there.

LL Yes.

AF Was that a private school or a public school?

LL No, no, no. It was a public school.

AF And where was that school?

LL It was in Tillsonburg.

AF In Tillsonburg. And the other one was in the local village?

LL Yes.

AF Did you wear a uniform to go there?

LL No.

AF And you stayed for lunch as well?

LL Yes.

AF And you said that all of your siblings went to the same school?

LL Yes.

AF You were describing some of the subjects you studied there. You studied a range of histories and—

LL We did. History, Latin was compulsory, French was compulsory every year. Latin was compulsory. Well, we had no choices. We took the subjects that were there. We had, there was a math, we had geometry, trigonometry, algebra, French, English (literature and composition), grammar. Well, composition was grammar really, every year. English literature every year. We studied a Shakespearean play, in depth, every year. We had, of course, history. What else did we study? Latin: Latin grammar, Latin composition. English, French grammar, French composition. And we had no choice through school.

AF Did boys and girls take the same classes?

LL Oh yes, every class was mixed.

AF Did you have gymnasium or--?

LL Yes, we did. We had a gymnasium. Basketball, whatever, the various sports. The boys played rugby as it was then called. Football.

AF And the girls played basketball? What else?

LL What else? Badminton, volleyball.

AF A range of activities? Were there were streams of education? Or you said everybody took the same?

LL Everybody doing the same.

AF No separation of people doing business?

LL No.

AF What about after 14 when the mandatory school leaving age was reached? Did the school change then? Did your education change in that school?

LL No, no. No, no. No, it went on.

AF Just fewer of you going through?

LL That's right. The classes became much smaller. By the time I was in fifth form, which was grade thirteen, I think, we were about twenty-five students. We started in the first grade we were 103, I remember very well, but by the time we had finished we were twenty-five. And that was in 1939 that I was, started my last year of high school. And that was a memorable year.

AF Yes, yes. I'd like to return now to your family life and I wanted to ask you about your parents' political and social activities. You had said that your parents, both your parents, your mother and father, were active in the local community?

LL Yes, they were.

AF Your father was a reeve?

LL Yes, he was. My parents were both very active in the Conservative party. And I can remember every election was very important, they would work in the election and--

AF What kind of work did they do?

LL Well, they, whatever people do who work in elections.

AF Sure. [laughs]

LL And my father, of course, was active municipally. He was involved in the county council of the county and-

AF What's the county name?

LL Yes, it was Norfolk county. Tillsonburg was just on the edge of Norfolk and we were in the northwest part of Norfolk county. Simcoe was the county town. Simcoe, Ontario. My parents were both, they were community leaders.

AF Yes. Was you father elected to his position [reeve]?

LL No. Yes, he was elected.

AF You remember this from the time you were quite young, as you were growing up?

LL Yes, he was always involved. Yes, he was.

AF Was this something his family did, and your mother's family?

LL No, my grandfather was not involved in local politics but he was always interested and they were always very much aware of what was going on. They were, you know, they always read two or three daily papers. And I can remember at one time my father had three daily papers delivered: the *London Free Press*, the *Toronto Globe*, or whatever it was called, and the *Winnipeg Free Press*, and I asked him why he had so many papers. And he said you know, well, you need to get a perspective on what they're thinking in various parts of the country. [laughs] So, they knew what was going on.

AF Your mother: did she read the papers as well?

LL Oh, absolutely. My mother was a very knowledgeable, bright woman. She read, she literally read thousands of books in her life. She read everything, and remembered what she read. I can remember, we went to, when we went to school, just about every night we had to stop at the local library to exchange books for her.
[laughter]

LL She read, yes.

AF Did you have radio in the house?

LL I beg your pardon?

AF Did you have radio in the house?

LL Yes, we did.

AF And when would you have got that in?

LL Well, before we had electricity we had a battery-powered radio. Marvellous!

AF So that would have been a source of entertainment and--

LL Well, a bit. Once we started to high school we, every night we'd have two or three hours of homework. So we didn't have much entertainment and--

AF I'm thinking of your parents, in terms of learning.

LL Well, I can tell you one thing that my mother would never allow us to listen to country music. And Saturday afternoons, it was always Saturday Afternoon at the Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, and I can still remember every Saturday afternoon that was what was listened to on the radio. We were never allowed to read comic books. And I can remember going to neighbours' houses and the children would have comic books.

[laughter]

AF So, you'd want to read those?

LL So, we had certain rules that were adhered to, and it was, you know, a very good thing. My mother would have a fit with these video games today. I'm sure they wouldn't have been allowed.

AF No, no. Yes, quite different. Your parents must have had some leisure time to be reading?

LL Well, they did. And they read. And that was-- And we grew up reading, and I still do, of course, and I do extensively. When we grew up, that was our recreation.

AF You were on a farm, but did you have particular days in the week when you had more time?

LL Yes, Sundays. [laughs] You went to Sunday school and church, and then you read.

AF Right. And your parents the same: the whole family went to church together?

LL Yes.

AF Sorry, you were going to say something?

LL Yes. We went. My mother went when the spirit moved her which-- [laughs] My mother was an interesting character, I can assure you. She was extremely bright, and I guess, [pause] she was really an educated person, you know, she read she remembered-- Both my parents were. They didn't have degrees but they knew more than ninety percent of the people with all sorts of degrees. They were-- I had no idea until I was older, what eccentric people they were!

AF Right.

[laughter]

LL It would be interesting to see them today.

AF Yes. Did they share the same religion? Did they go to the same church?

LL Oh yes. Oh yes. Well, actually, my mother had been brought up Anglican. She was 14 when they emigrated from England, and Cornwall was very Anglo-Catholic, and that was the religion that my mother had had until she was fourteen. So she found it difficult when she came to Canada and they settled in that part of Ontario. The nearest Anglican church was six miles away, and people didn't go six miles to church. And in the local village there was a Methodist church, and I think that my mother found it pretty flat after an Anglo-Catholic Church.

AF So that was--?

LL So she went there.

AF And that was the church you attended?

LL Yes. But, you know, I'm an Anglican. I became an Anglican. But that's another story...

AF Yes. In terms of community service, did your parents participate in the church organization at all?

LL Not when I was a child. But what my parents did -- the Depression was in full swing when I was by the time I was seven -- and they looked after people. I would, in those years—

AF Through the church?

LL No, through themselves. Families would move out of Toronto because they were so poor. There was no work here. Welfare in Toronto was appalling. People went to bed, children went to bed hungry. Families would move out to rural Ontario, this was the 30s, it's hard to believe, and they would think that they would be able to get food there. And these poor children, and I can still see them, would come to school and I'd go home and tell my parents, or my siblings would, and tell them a new family had come. And my parents would immediately that night load the car with food and go up, and my father, who was running welfare, would say to the father "Report to the town hall tomorrow. We're hiring people." And there was no welfare. Everybody was on the payroll of the municipality. My father was, you know, sixty years ahead of Mike Harris. At one time they had sixty men working for that municipality. That was sixty families who weren't on welfare, but they were working and being paid, and my father, and I can remember in his old age said, "The worst thing you can do for anybody is destroy their

pride.” And those men would work, and they never lost their pride, and when they got another job they would-- And I can still remember, my father was so amused, they would come down to my father and resign. Which was, you know, marvellous. And the children were brought up to understand that their father had always worked, and so that was one thing that my father did years ahead of his time.

AF It must have been very hard for the municipality to support them. That’s a really big contribution.

LL It really was. But they did. They did and, you know, I can remember-- They, you know, the taxes had to be paid on the farm every year, and my parents found the money and I don’t know how they did it. But they did.

AF Did your father initiate that programme? Or was that something that the community did?

LL No, he was the one. It was his idea. And he initiated it.

AF When would that have started? Was it at the beginning of the Depression, or was it some time later?

LL I suppose it was back in the, I don’t know exactly, but in the early 30s because he was the reeve of the municipality and ran the welfare all through the 30s. But there was no welfare they all worked. [laughs]

AF Yes, that’s wonderful.

LL And what they did they went out and cleared all the brush out of the roads, and you know they found, repaired roads, they worked.

AF Was there anything else that your parents did when you were growing up in terms of community service?

LL My father, they looked after people. And I can remember if my father and mother if, I can remember one poor family and they couldn't afford a doctor and mother would, on occasion they would-- I can remember in the middle of the night hearing someone banging on the door, and this man's wife was going to deliver a baby and he came and my mother went and literally delivered the baby, you know. When my parents died it was a revelation. The whole day there were hundreds of people called at the funeral parlour, and all I heard all day was "You have no idea what your mother and father did for me." And then I would hear tales of what they had done, which was a great legacy. And they were, you know, very talented people who used their talents for the public good, and they really did.

AF Where do you think they got those values from?

LL Well, from their parents obviously. They were born with them. My, my grandfather, my maternal grandfather, was a gentleman and may not have been an astute businessman but he was a gentleman, and my paternal grandfather was a, well, they were just very superior human beings.

[laughter]

AF And when you were growing up, was this something your parents articulated to you: the importance of community service? Or was it demonstrated through what they did?

LL Children, children learn by example. And they learn, yes, they, you learn by example and you learn by teaching, and we got both in our home.

AF And your siblings: you can see that they went on in the same form?

LL Yes. Well my older sister who is still alive, I was just talking about her this morning. Well, she worked for the local Children's Aid in Woodstock and was absolutely wonderful as a social worker.

AF Right. Was she trained as a social worker?

LL She trained as a nurse, and then she worked for, I guess, forty years doing social work with the local Children's Aid.

AF Right. Wonderful. Yes. [pause] A question that continues from that is that your life has been very much a life of service to community in a variety of different ways, including the legal community: so that would seem to come from your parents' example?

LL Well, when you have grown up in a household and in a family where the most important thing is not money, not acquisition of material things, but in looking after people, it's just a part of you. And I was so fortunate in meeting my husband who is even more so than I! [laughs] You know, his whole life, has really been one of really public service. So, it's been, we've been very fortunate.

AF Just to return to your schooling that we were talking about earlier: how did you arrive at the decision to embark on a career when you were finishing school?

LL I, I don't know. I don't know how I arrived at it. But I can remember when I was eight years old I had gone through the first four years of school in one year and I had stood first, in whatever year I was in, and I, I can remember running home from school the whole mile and a half because I was so excited. [laughs] And my grandmother was still alive and she said to me, and I can still remember, "I think that you must become a schoolteacher." Because in those years a woman became a schoolteacher, a nurse or a secretary. And I can remember, and I don't know where I had got that thinking, "Isn't

that funny that my grandmother doesn't know that I'm going to university, and I'm going to do something else".

AF And you were eight years old?

LL I was eight. And I don't know where I got it from, but it was there. And all through high school I knew that I was going to university, and I was going to get an education and actually, when I was in grade, it was called fifth form, it was grade 13, I had very high marks and I sent an application, I was all of sixteen when I did it, to the medical school at Western and was accepted by return mail. And my parents then got into the act, and I'll never forget it. They took me up to the University, and I can still remember, and I, whether it was the Dean of Medicine, somebody, saying "Don't let that nice young girl go into medicine. It's no profession for a woman. She should go into, if she wants to do something, she should go into our nursing course". So I went, in those years you did what you were told. I went into the nursing course and I had two, it was a year and a half, it was two years, but I stayed on for two years, and took every course in the book. You, with fifty credits you, no with 45 credits you took a BA, and I had about 22 credits in my first year there and I was finishing my BA in two years. In February the Dean of the College called me and he said "What are you doing"? And I said "I'm going and training at the Toronto General in September and I want a BA before I go." Because I knew that I wasn't going to stay in nursing, that I was being obedient and--

AF Obedient to your parents?

LL Well, I guess so. But, you know, I, there was something wrong with this whole scenario. I was pretty young. And he said "You can't get a BA in two years" and I said "I'm passing" and he said, as I recall, "Passing! We've seldom had anyone with

marks as high as you have! That isn't the issue. What would people say if you had a BA in 2 years from Western." And he made me drop two subjects. So I started university, to the, in the Toronto General Hospital in September, and the first year I wrote off one subject, second year I wrote off the other subject. So I had a BA. And in 1945 I had finished nursing and I, with \$150 and a BA you could become a law student. And the one thing, and God is kind, that being in the Toronto General for 3 years convinced me was that I didn't want to go into medicine. I hated every aspect of that hospital and everything about it. And I, I guess I can tell you this, I stood first in my graduating class in nursing in both practice and theory, which was quite unusual, and won every scholarship and prize they had. And Western University, the Dean of Nursing came down, and said if I would go to Columbia Western would send me to Columbia to do my PhD, and the only requirement would be that I would go back and teach at Western. The Toronto General offered me, you know, if I would go to University, and do whatever. Anyway, I said thanks a lot, but no thanks, and [laughs] I left and went to law school, and that was it.

AF Can I just stop you there, and I'm just going to turn the tape?

END OF DISK ONE

DISK NUMBER TWO

AF This is Alison Forrest, Treasurers' Interviews, with Laura Legge. Today is the seventh of July, 2004, continuing the interview: interview number one.

....

AF We were just talking about your experience in nursing. And I wonder if you could talk briefly about the impact of the Second World War. You were training during the Second World War?

LL Yes, I can indeed. I was at the Toronto General Hospital. There were about 1239 patients, and in those years they were all literally bed patients. We didn't have people getting out of bed after surgery. After an appendectomy they stayed in bed for ten days before they were allowed out of bed. There were 300 student nurses, 100 in each of the three years. Nurses' training was three years. It was an on-the-job training. There were 300 students and 100 graduate nurses, and we did all of the nursing care in that hospital for 1259 patients. And nursing care consisted of bathing the patient, making their beds, making certain that they were fed if they couldn't feed themselves. We had to do their dressings, we had to do everything for them. You didn't walk, you ran. You worked for, you were supposed to work 10 hours a day. I had, we went on duty at 7, we finished at 7 usually, we had 30 minutes for lunch and 30 minutes for dinner. If-- I had been in training for almost a year and I went into the laundry or the linen room one day and there was a sign on the door "Hours" and I said to one of the senior nurses "What's that?", and I said "What's that?", and she said "Oh, ignore it. We're supposed to have two hours a day off but nobody has it, or an hour and a half a day off, but ignore it. Nobody has it. Just ignore it."

[laughter]

LL I'd been in there a year and didn't know it. You never had time off. We literally worked 11, 12 hours a day and you were fortunate if you got off duty at 7. And

it was a real training, and we did everything. We did the bedside nursing. And after we had worked we had classes, and we were, we had--

AF In the evenings?

LL Yes. And we were taught all about the various diseases, and the symptoms and you were on the job and being taught at the same time. And at the end of three years, and we could diagnose faster than any house doctor or intern. We knew all the symptoms and, but we weren't allowed to diagnose, but we knew. And to this day I can see someone in the early stages of Parkinson's and I know immediately, as a matter of fact I can just look instinctively at people and can figure out what's wrong with them. It's incredible the training that we had. It was very hard work. The war was on. There was no auxiliary help. If you had an orderly on a ward you were fortunate. Usually we didn't.

AF So you did the lifting as well as—?

LL Oh, we did everything. Yes. We had, there were no ward maids. Once in a while there'd be a ward maid and you'd think we were in clover, but usually we did absolutely everything. And the other thing, the Germans were sinking all of the ships that were bringing dishes from England and the hospital ran out of dishes, and I can remember you would rinse the soup bowl and the poor people on the wards would have to have all of their food out of the same bowl, there were no dishes. It was, and there was no supply of linens. It was, you know you would fight to get a clean sheet for your patients. It was really a very difficult time. And many of the doctors of course were overseas, and the older doctors were still doing surgery well into their 70s because there

were no young doctors, they were all overseas. And it was an interesting and difficult period. And I always remember it as a very dark period.

AF Right. Was that partly because of the war, and partly because it was something you felt you didn't want to do?

LL That's true. But nevertheless, you had a sense of duty and you realized that it wasn't the patient's fault that you didn't want to be, so you did your very best for them. You really put yourself out. And we all did. We all worked terribly hard. Because it was the patients who needed the care. And you didn't just, as I say, you didn't walk, you ran. And to this day I can't slow down when I'm walking and going ninety miles an hour, and you never get over it. Even yesterday my son said "Mother, slow down!"

[laughing]

LL But you can't. And it was, it was a great training. And you learn how to look after people, how to nurse. And people of my generation, of course, deplore the lack of practical training of nurses today, and when I go into hospitals and see signs--

INTERRUPTION. TAPE RESUMES

AF So, you were talking about the difference between nursing education now and earlier.

LL Well, we weren't, we didn't talk about education, we talked about training. And we were taught about septic procedure, for example. And last year when the SARS epidemic was on I was just shaking my head. You know, I can tell you that in the days when I trained we didn't have post-operative infections, and we didn't have the antibiotics that they have today. As a matter of fact I helped to administer in, I think it was in the winter of '43, the first antibiotic that was administered and it was to be a --

AF In Toronto? Or Canada?

LL In Toronto, in Canada. Because it was being manufactured in the Banting Institute on College Street across the road from the Toronto General, and it came over in a beaker with a cover on it and was poured into a chest cavity of a patient who had had a lobectomy, and they couldn't cure the infection.

AF And what is a lobectomy?

LL Removal of part of the lung. And they couldn't get the infection cleared up. And the first day after this had been poured into the chest cavity his temperature was normal. And everybody was talking about this miraculous drug that had been found. It was penicillin. So nursing was terribly important because it was our nursing care that prevented the spread of infections, and we knew-- Nobody had to tell us to wash our hands!

AF Do you think that nurses at that time had a strong sense of the importance of their role in relation to caring for their patients?

LL Oh we did. Absolutely. And we realized that we were essential to the care of the patient, and as a support for the doctors and-- Today, all of the pride must have been taken out of nursing. And we were terribly proud of being nurses, and of our caps, and of our uniforms and our badges. That was our uniform. And if you were from a Toronto General, you knew you were the best in the world: this was the kind of pride that was instilled in us.

AF And did you choose that hospital for that reason: you thought it was the best hospital?

LL Yes, I chose it because at that time it had the reputation of having the best nursing school in the country. So I chose it and went there and finished but I knew after I had been there one year that I wasn't going to stay in nursing. And I had an uncle who was a lawyer and he was a judge and in '43 or '44 I was on holidays in the fall and there was a judges' conference in Niagara Falls and he, and my aunt took my sister and me for a week's holiday. And my uncle and I used to get up for breakfast, we were both morning people, and he knew, and I was talking to him about I didn't know what to do and he looked at me and said "You should be a lawyer." And it suddenly hit me, and I realized, and I kept thinking about it. It had everything I wanted. I wanted something where there was, you would be a student all your life, where you would be learning. And incidentally yesterday I read a judgment of your fellow countryman, Mr. Justice Cullity and it's a brilliant judgment in this week's reports. My he writes well, and he's a learned man. You should read it!

AF I will.

LL It's an estate case, and it's all based on equity. But this is what makes law interesting. You never stop learning.

AF Yes, it's true. A couple of quick questions before we wind up: You said that your sisters became nurses as well, and one of them went into social work. Did they stay--?

LL The other one nursed until she married. She married and has two children. And they're now retired. My other sister who is older than I, of course, is she's 84 and, of course, she's retired. She's the one that did social work. She and I are very close.

AF Do you think there were the same reasons for entering nursing as with you?
That it was suggested to them?

LL No, in those years, in our generation, it's hard to believe: you became a teacher, a nurse or a secretary. And it wasn't, it just wasn't done for girls to do anything else. And remember, when I became a lawyer, I don't know, but I suspect there weren't 24 women in all of Ontario practicing law.

AF Highly unusual, yes.

LL You just didn't, and if you married that was it, you didn't keep on working. Even my classmates who married weren't expected to keep practicing.

AF The final question, in relation to nursing, have you kept up at all with any of the women that you trained with at the hospital?

LL Absolutely. Absolutely. We're very close. One called me two days' ago. She's developing Alzheimer's, and it is so sad. She calls me, and she knows she's losing her mind. No, we are very close. We actually are almost like sisters. It's like people who went through the war together, they remain friends forever. And we're very close. I look after them, we meet, we have met most of us at least once a year, ever since.

[laughs]

AF Yes. That's wonderful.

LL Yes.

AF Thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW

LAURA LEGGE INTERVIEW #2

DATE: JULY 13, 2004

PLACE: LEGGE AND LEGGE, BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS

65 ST. CLAIR AVE. EAST, TORONTO

INTERVIEWER: ALISON FORREST

MEDIA: 2 MINI-DISKS APPROX. 37:09 AND 37:16 MINUTES IN LENGTH

This is Alison Forrest for the Law Society of Upper Canada. Interviewing Mrs. Laura Legge, July thirteenth, 2004. Second interview.

....

AF Now, the first area I'd like to ask you about is your law school experiences. So, just to backtrack a little bit to what we were talking about last week: you trained as a nurse during the Second World War?

LL Yes.

AF And immediately on graduation you left [nursing]. Is that correct?

LL Correct.

AF So, that was 1945?

LL Correct.

AF OK. You felt that you didn't want to continue working as a nurse. But an uncle had suggested law as a possibility to you?

LL Yes.

AF Was that the first idea you had of entering law as a profession?

LL Well, I had decided a year before I finished my nurse's training that I was going to law school.

AF Right, so [the decision] was made some time before you had finished nurse's training?

LL Oh, yes.

AF Right. The uncle you spoke to was a lawyer?

LL Yes, he was.

AF What was his name?

LL Livermore. Ernest Livermore.

AF Was he on your mother's side or your father's side?

LL My mother's side. He was an uncle by marriage.

AF Right.

LL He married my mother's sister. Yes.

AF Right. Did you have any other lawyers in the family?

LL No.

AF Why did your uncle think that you might be suited to law?

LL I don't know. [laughs] But he was right. I love the profession, and have from the beginning.

AF What made you think that you would be suited to law at that time, do you remember?

LL Yes, I wanted to be in a profession where you were learning always. Where you weren't, where you wouldn't reach a dead end, and law is a profession where intellectually it's always expanding. And you must read all the time to keep up with the law. And this is what I find interesting about the profession.

AF Yes. The last time we spoke you said that around that time – so around the Second World War – that the usual choices for a woman to go into employment were nursing, teaching, and being a secretary.

LL That's correct.

AF You considered medicine, though, at the age of sixteen.

LL I did. I was accepted at medical school [at Western].

AF So, the question I would want to ask, then, is about the time period (the Second World War): a lot of people have suggested that the war opened up opportunities for women in employment, and allowed women to think of alternatives from the usual types of careers. Do you think that this had any impact on you at all, at this time?

LL No. No. And I don't think that the Second World War made that much difference. Because when I started to law school it was in the fall of 1945 there was, the war had ended and all of the veterans had returned and had enrolled at law school, and there were thirteen women out of probably three hundred in the class. And of the thirteen women eight of us were called to the Bar. And in those years, still, when we were called to the Bar in 1948, if you married you were not expected to continue to practice. So I don't think that it made that much difference.

AF Right. I was thinking, perhaps, of your own attitudes that made you think that you could do other, different things.

LL Well, my attitudes [laughs]: I've always been a pretty independent thinker, and my attitudes were always my own. And I've never been really influenced by what the masses are thinking.

AF So, you had decided about a year before you had finished your nursing programme that you would go into law?

LL Right.

AF Was there a break between finishing nursing and starting law?

LL No, no.

AF So it was continuous?

LL Right.

AF And were your parents supportive of your change of career?

LL Oh yes. Absolutely.

AF They didn't have a problem with law being a non-traditional occupation for women, at all?

LL No.

AF Which law schools did you apply to?

LL There was only one law school in 1945, and it was run by the benchers of the Law Society: Osgoode Hall at Osgoode Hall. That was the only law school.

AF OK. You didn't think of leaving the province?

LL No.

AF And the programmes that were in place at that time: was that the morning programme and--

LL Articling in the afternoon. Yes.

AF How did you go about looking for your articling position?

LL Well, there was no problem because I had an articling position before the war ended, and they were delighted to have any law student. And [pause] it wasn't a problem. And in those years the, all of the, a large law firm was four lawyers, so everybody was working in a small law firm and I articulated with a solo practitioner.

AF Sorry, I wasn't watching this. [pause] Go ahead.

INTERRUPTION

INTERVIEW RESUMES

LL And there was, as I recall, there was no difficulty finding a place to article.

AF What was the name of the firm that you articulated with?

LL I articulated with John Burden, B-U-R-D-E-N who was a sole practitioner.

AF Where did he practice?

LL It was in the Confederation Life Building. The old, at Richmond, no, at Queen and Victoria.

AF So you were there for how long?

LL I was there for two years, and then in my final year I articulated with the provincial government for my last year.

AF What made you change from one to the other?

LL I can't really recall. I guess for a little different training. [pause] I don't know why I changed.

AF Was that usual to split articles?

LL Oh, yes, oh yes. It wasn't unusual at all.

AF You weren't expected to stay for the full term?

LL Yes.

AF Right. How was the experience with John Burden's office?

LL Oh, excellent. Because in those years if you articulated with a sole practitioner, you learned to do everything. You learned to keep books, you learned to do accounting, you learned to do real estate, estates. It was a marvellous general practice. You learned

to do corporate work. And it was a great experience and he was a very good teacher. And he gave me a free reign. He let me learn things and do things.

AF Great. And were you the only articling student there at the time?

LL Yes. For part of the time, yes, I was the only articling student, that's correct. One summer there was another articling student, but other than that I was alone.

AF And you said that he was a sole practitioner?

LL Yes.

AF So were there just the two of you, or did you have office assistants?

LL Oh yes, he had, he had one secretary who was a brilliant person who today would not have been a secretary, she would have been a lawyer.

AF Right. So in your third year you went into the provincial government: which department was this?

LL Health.

AF And where was that located?

LL That was in the Whitney Block at Queen's Park.

AF And you were able to do everything in John Burden's office. He allowed you pretty free reign. What about when you went to the provincial government?

LL Mostly there, as a student I can't really remember what I did. I was reading law, constitutional law, a great deal of it, um, learning to draft regulations, statutes. But then I stayed on after I graduated, and it's all a blur. Probably why I went is that it seemed to me that it was a natural fit having been a nurse and a lawyer to be with the Department of Health. And it worked out very well for a few years.

AF It did. Your skills that you brought with you were useful there?

LL Yes. Yes.

AF Together, your articling experience at the two different places: do you feel that they adequately prepared you for your professional career subsequently?

LL Oh, yes. Yes.

AF You talked about the business side of working for a general practitioner and the drafting side and basic skills that you needed as a lawyer in the provincial office.

LL Yes, yes. That's correct.

AF Did you keep up with John Burden? Was that a relationship that continued?

LL No. No. He was an older man when I articulated with him. We were, I always had a great respect and admiration for him. And his daughters, one named Helen Burden-Murray, became a lawyer, and, of course, we were great friends, and his other daughter, Marjorie, I knew. His son became a lawyer, and he was tragically killed in an accident some years ago, but he-- Helen was a brilliant girl and a great friend of mine, always. Yes, but I knew the family.

AF Returning to initially going to law school: did you apply for scholarships to go through?

LL There were no scholarships in law school.

AF So you were working your way through in your articling experience? It paid your way--?

LL Yes.

AF What were the requirements you needed to meet in order to go to law school?

LL You needed to have, my joke is my BA and a hundred and fifty dollars.

[laughs] That's all you needed to become a law student. And, um, so with that, oh, and a

letter from a clergyman attesting to your good character. And with the way the benchers controlled numbers, they did it, fifty percent of all those in examinations failed every examination. Regardless of your marks, and if you weren't in the top fifty you failed. So, the first day of lectures of 1945 we were about three hundred, and the day we were called to the Bar in June of 1948 we were seventy-five. And about, I understand eventually another 125 were called to the Bar, because our year eventually had two hundred lawyers. But it was very rough going.

AF Yes, yes. Were those people who didn't pass immediately able to continue their articling? Were they just able to extend their articling period?

LL I don't know. I guess so. What had happened in retrospect, I think it was exceedingly cruel and unfair, because the majority of my classmates were veterans. And these were, I can still remember Stuart McBride who came back, he had lost a leg in the war, John Matheson who all the time he was in law school was getting treatment. He had been shot and very badly wounded, and has always been partially paralyzed. There was Edward Christie who had had his face shot off and all the time he was at law school he was having plastic surgery. And then there were all sorts of them who had been wounded and there was absolutely, so far as I could see, no mercy from the benchers, they didn't care. And it was, I think it was exceedingly unkind, because there were some wonderful people, who would have been marvellous lawyers. They just chopped them, and this was how they controlled numbers. So it's a far cry from what it is today. So it was not, in many respects, it was not a pleasant three years to see the marks that were given.

AF Did it feel very competitive?

LL Well we never thought of that. You were competing with yourself. You were only competing with yourself to pass.

AF Did it matter what grades you received so long as you passed?

LL No. What mattered was that you passed.

AF Yes. You said that one of the requirements was to have a letter from a clergyman. Did you interview at the school as well?

LL No.

AF Did you go along to see what you would be doing before you started?

LL No.

AF Did you speak to anybody who had recently graduated?

LL Oh now, I knew. Yes, I knew young lawyers and I talked to them. Yes.

AF So you had some sense of what to expect?

LL Yes, yes.

AF Did you have any idea when you were starting out at law school of the area of law that you might like to practice?

LL No. No, I didn't.

AF When did that interest emerge?

LL In those days you didn't set out to say I'm going to be an immigration lawyer, I'm going to be whatever. You became whatever there was available to be. And one of our most prominent counsel, who subsequently became a judge, as he said, "I took whatever walked in the door to do, and it happened to be litigation." So, this was the way it was in those years, and we didn't have the specialization that we have today. You

know, the average lawyer was a general practitioner, which isn't so now and can't be. Law is far too complicated.

AF When you were training, where were the classes held? Were they held at Osgoode Hall?

LL They were held at Osgoode Hall. And in our second, and it was a great problem because of the space, and there was a huge classroom that we had. And then in our second year we took courses for one term at Metropolitan Church in their church hall. That was in the fall of '46. And then we were back to Osgoode Hall and we took lectures in Convocation Hall.

AF It isn't such a big space for that many people.

LL Oh, it was crowded. They were up in the balcony as well. They were just sitting in rows, with a PA system that frequently didn't work. It was interesting.

[laughter]

AF What would your typical day have been? You had classes in the morning, is that correct?

LL Three hours of lectures in the morning. You had to be in your office for articling. As I recall, but it's sort of vague, you went to your office immediately, and were there until one. And then you would have an hour for lunch, and then you were back in the office until five. And everybody quit at five in those years. Not anymore.

[laughter]

LL And that was for five days, and on Saturdays you were in the office from nine until one. Saturdays were working days for at least half of the day, and we didn't have

the holidays you have now. And after I had been articling for two years I was given a week's holiday.

AF And that's the only week you had off? [laughs]

LL That's correct. And, you know, it's strange I can well recall Easter Monday you were in the office working. Boxing Day you were in the office working. They were not statutory holidays. And strangely enough, no one complained; you just worked.

AF When did you do your school work: was that in the evenings?

LL Yes, you did.

AF So you left your office and went home and did your schoolwork.

LL That's correct.

AF Did you have papers, or was it exam-based?

LL No, it was completely examination-based.

AF You've told me about the class size. Now the type of class: was it all lectures, did you have seminars, was it practical...?

LL No, it was absolutely just lectures.

INTERRUPTION

INTERVIEW RESUMES

AF To continue with the interview. We had a short break.

I was asking about the nature of the classes you took, and you said that they were lecture-based. Do you think that this was a result of the sheer size of the student population?

LL No. I think Osgoode Hall Law School had always been lecture-based and examination-based.

AF Right. So it was continuing a tradition?

LL Yes, that's right.

AF OK. Did you have a choice of classes?

LL No, no. There was no choice.

AF Did you have a sense of moving through your years at law school with the other students – a lot of them fell by the wayside as you've just described – because they didn't pass the exams? But, did you have a sense of being part of a particular year, and something that has continued for you in your professional career?

LL Not, well, we have, yes, many of my classmates were friends, still are friends. But it's probably because professionally we have dealt with each other, and there is a certain bond with the class of '48 because it was the first class after the war. And there were some wonderful people in that class, who subsequently became, you know, made a great contribution to the country as judges, as politicians. And every five years we have had a class reunion which has been quite remarkable. And, but we haven't, you know, there wasn't-- Our class was a class of quite mature people. These were men who have been through life and death experiences and were, I suppose, most of them considered themselves fortunate to be alive. They were very mature people. They weren't children by any means. It was a different atmosphere.

AF Yes. Do you think that was true for your year, would there have been one more year like this?

LL Yes, I would think-- I know the following class of '49 when my husband was called to the Bar was the same, and perhaps even the class of 1950 would have been the same.

AF So just an unusual group going through at that time.

LL That's right. That's right.

AF. Now, you were older as well. You had already done your BA and nursing.

So would you have been around the same age as...?

LL No, I was younger. I was, when I started to law school I was twenty-two.

AF Twenty-two, yes I was thinking twenty-three. Some of these men, they would have been, what age?

LL Probably they would be two or three years older than I, on average.

AF And as you say, with a great deal of experience.

LL That's right.

AF Now, you said there were around thirteen women who started with you?

LL That's correct. Eight of us were called to the Bar. Five were [pause] left behind for one reason or another.

AF Right. You've already mentioned several classmates from your year as having very notable careers. Were there other people that you can think of that stand out from that group as having contributed significantly to the legal profession?

LL Well, in our class there was Lloyd Holden, there were several judges of the Supreme Court, at one time there were seven of my classmates who were benchers of the Law Society.

AF Oh, really? [laughs]

LL That's right.

AF Seven, that's extraordinary.

LL Yes, and it really was. So, you know, they were people who had given a great deal during the war, and continued to give. They had a sense of service, and to be a bencher of the Law Society you need to have a sense of service.

[laughter]

AF Yes. Had you known them quite well before they became benchers?

LL Some of them I had, yes.

AF What about your law professors at law school: could you tell me something about them?

LL We had Cecil Wright who taught us, well we had four professors. We had Cecil Wright, Bora Laskin, John Willis [pause], and who was the other one? Well, we had Stanley Edwards, who subsequently became a tax expert in a law firm. Bora Laskin taught us for three years, as did, and, oh, John Falconbridge was the Dean. John Falconbridge was the expert on contracts and legal history. Cecil Wright taught us torts, [pause] I can't think of what else he taught us, because torts stands out in mind. Because they stood, they sat at the front and lectured, and there were no questions, and you took notes and listened to them. Bora Laskin taught us constitutional law, he taught us real property. Those are two subjects that stand out. Stanley Edwards taught us taxation. John Falconbridge taught us, well I told you, contracts and legal history and I forget what else. And then we had practitioners who came in and gave us practical courses, which were marvellous. Someone came in and taught us mortgages, and someone else came in and taught us conveyancing and these were very practical courses.

INTERRUPTION

INTERVIEW RESUMES

AF Returning to our interview: You were talking about practical courses that you took.

LL Yes, we had practitioners who came in and taught us. We had, Charles Dubin taught us bankruptcy, I can remember. And Colonel Foster, as he was always known – he'd been a Colonel in the First World War -- taught us Practice, for three years. And I don't know what you would call Practice today, probably jurisprudence or something. But he taught us. And it was really marvellous for three years, his Practice course. So we had a mixture of the-- John Falconbridge, Bora Laskin, and Cecil Wright teaching us substantive law, and the practitioners teaching us practical law, and then we had the legal experience of working in offices every day. So it really was an intensive and a marvellous training.

AF Yes, yes. And the practical courses: how were they taught?

LL Lectures, once again. Lectures and examination-based, yes.

AF Right, right. Returning to the experience of being thirteen students of three hundred students who were women: did you have any sense that the thirteen women were treated any differently from the male population?

LL No, no. Never entered our minds. No. We were all law students.

AF Yes. And I wanted to move on, then, to ask you what you did outside your school hours. Were you a member of any clubs or organizations or extracurricular type activities, law or otherwise?

LL No. Those, the three years [laughs], you did well to survive the three years. And any extra time you had you spent studying. It was a pretty intensive three years. Other than your social life, of course.

AF Yes. When you first left home you went to Western, and you did your BA there, what form of accommodation did you have? You had to leave home. You weren't living at home at that point?

LL No.

AF What type of accommodation did you have?

LL I lived actually, when I was at, when I left home I was 17. And I was a pretty ingenuous little farm girl going off to a city of 60,000, but I thought I was, I knew it all. But my parents, who were very protective, had me live with an aunt and uncle, which was not a bad idea, when I think of it. And I was looked after, but I thought this was insulting, but they were absolutely right. And then, when I was 19, of course, I came to Toronto to train as a nurse.

AF But you would have been living in residence then?

LL Oh, yes. Absolutely.

AF Then when you went to law school.

LL Law school: I lived with nurses. We shared a flat.

AF These are nurses you trained with?

LL Yes. And they would be, they were working and I was a student.

AF Was this your first independence of family and [nursing] residence?

LL I suppose so. But, once again, I never thought of it. Because, you know, your living accommodation you lived, and it wasn't a big issue.

AF Would this have been the point when you came to know Toronto, in these years, or...?

LL Oh, no. Toronto: when I came to Toronto in 1942 it was really a small city. It was half a million people, and in the three years that I was training as a nurse I got to know Toronto quite well.

AF Despite the hours you worked?

LL That's right. Yes.

AF Did you think that you would stay in Toronto to practice, or did you ever think of returning home, or to that area?

LL No, I didn't think I would stay here until I met my husband. That was, as I say facetiously, that was my own undoing.

AF That was going to be my next question: you said that you met your husband in the programme? He was the year behind you?

LL He wasn't. He was in my year when I first met him. But he was one of the ones who failed by one mark. If you had three supplementals you could try them, if you had four you couldn't. And in our, in 1947 he came back from overseas in the fall of 1946. He didn't get back until September of 1946 because he was kept behind in Holland after the war ended working at headquarters sending the Canadians home. And in January of '46 he went, he was to leave for law school. He had had his first year before he went overseas. He went to London and worked with C.P. Stacey writing the history of the war and came back to Canada in September, and enrolled in law school. He was in law school for, I think, about a month or six weeks, and he became very sick and was taken into, he was still officially in the military, taken into Charley Park, which was the

army hospital, had a very bad appendectomy, didn't get back to law school until two weeks before examinations. And even at that he tried the examinations – I didn't know him then – and he missed, I think he failed two subjects by two or three marks only. In the winter months-- And I can remember seeing him, and having been a nurse, and I saw him walking into class, and he was, he looked absolutely sick, and I said to the law student sitting beside me, "Who is that walking corpse?" and she said [laughs], "That is Bruce Legge, and he's a very nice fellow" and I replied, "Well, he's a very sick fellow!" And, in fact, in February he went into the hospital again for six weeks and in spite of it he tried-- He had adhesions from the surgery and he had a very bad time, and in those years they didn't have the medical advances they have today. He came back to law school and he had four supplementals, one of them, they were sort of forty-nine, forty-eight. Well, that wasn't unusual. All of us had marks in the fifties. And he asked to be able to write them, and they wouldn't allow him to. So he repeated. This is why he was a year behind me: for one mark. Having been sick for at least half the year. Wonderful. So that is why my husband started in the class of '48 and I met him then, but he ended up being called in '49.

AF When did you get married?

LL We got married in July of 1950. My husband was called in '49. He didn't get a job until the next year. As now, there were no jobs for lawyers. [laughs] He got a job, I think, in February of '50 and then we were married in July of '50.

AF You said that when you started law school you didn't have any area of practice in mind and that that was not what you thought about at that time. Did you think at any time about your future practice of law in relation to other responsibilities, such as

being married or having children? Did being a woman make a difference to the kinds of choices you thought you might make, in terms of what area you might practice in?

LL I don't, I never-- [pause] You see, I never thought of myself as a woman lawyer. I always thought of myself as a lawyer. And my generation did. We were, we were just lawyers. And if you married and had children, it was something that you accommodated, if you were working. But remember, very few women who married and had children worked. They worked. Will you excuse me? I'll only be a minute.

END OF DISK ONE.

BEGINNING OF DISK TWO

AF This is Alison Forrest speaking. It's Tuesday July the thirteenth, 2004, continuing with the second interview with Laura Legge.

....

AF Now, we were talking earlier about your experience as a law student. I'd like to turn now to your first job working as a lawyer. You articulated in your final year with the provincial health department?

LL Yes.

AF And then you stayed on with them?

LL I stayed on with them, yes, from 1948 until the beginning of 1955. However, I had, I had 3 children. I was married in 1950, our daughter was born in March of 1952, I had a leave of absence from the first of February until the end of August. An absence was without pay, and they were delighted to have me go back. I went back for a period,

our second son was born, our second child was born in August of 1954. I was away until the following January or February and then I, our third child was born in October of 1955, and I left the government in February of 1955 permanently. [pause] That's right.

AF So, 1948 to 1955 with two breaks?

LL Two periods off, yes.

AF So there were no maternity leaves then—

LL No.

AF --it was simply a leave of absence?

LL Yes.

AF And were other women doing that in the office at all?

LL No. I can't think of any others. No, no. I think I was the only one. There were very few lawyers working for government in those years. I should think that in the whole government there weren't twenty lawyers.

AF Right. And how many of those would have been women?

LL I beg your pardon?

AF How many of the twenty might have been women?

LL I don't remember. I honestly don't. There were some of us. One of my classmates was working for the Attorney General. I don't remember.

AF Right. We were talking earlier about balancing family and work. Were you drawn to working for the provincial government because it might be easier than other types of work to balance—?

LL No, no. It was just a job to do. [laughs] Because there was very little work for lawyers in those years. And certainly you could start a private practice, but there

wasn't much legal work in the city. Toronto was a pretty dead city until-- The expansion started, I guess, in the 1960s.

AF So it was slow, slow work?

LL Oh yes. It was a very slow, small city.

AF In this time period, so post-war and early fifties, it was a common practice for women to leave work, either when they married or when they had children.

LL That's correct.

AF But you didn't do that, so—

LL That's correct.

AF How do you explain your difference from—

LL I don't know. I guess I was-- I had always done in my life what I had decided I was going to do. And I had decided I was going to practice law, and I practiced law. And you cannot-- Law is a profession that you have to work at continually. I was going to say continuously but you can leave it for very short periods. But you cannot leave it for any extended period. And I knew that. And I fortunately--

AF I'm sorry—

INTERVIEW STOPS

INTERVIEW RESUMES

[A couple of seconds of recording missing].

LL ...[was able to go from the?] government and started my own practice-- Because I knew I had to have freedom with three small children, to choose my own hours, and to have whatever flexible time I needed. In, we have always lived near

Yonge and St. Clair. In 1955 we sold a house we had on Delisle Avenue and bought the house we're still in on Lonsdale Road, and it's only a mile from the office. In June of 1956, I rented my first office at Yonge and St. Clair having tried to do some private practice from my home. But it was impossible with three small children.

AF Yes.

LL I have always had a housekeeper who is sort of a nanny/housekeeper and I, but have been very near our home, and I was able to have an office with a secretary beginning in June of 1956, and I have been at Yonge and St. Clair ever since. And I, when the children were small, because I only lived a mile from the office-- Well, in the first place, I didn't spend a full day in the office until the children were in school. I stayed home for half a day or I, I could arrange my time. When I started to come to the office all day I was able to see the children off to school in the morning. I went home and had lunch with them every day, I would be home a few minutes after five every day. Of course, there was always-- My children never went home to an empty house. There was always someone there. I put them to bed, unless my husband was home, and wanted to do so. I put them to bed at night, I read to them, I heard their prayers. Consequently, we had a very close family, and still do. I think it's extremely important for parents to make sure that you're parents. And I was very lucky that I only lived a mile from the office and I was able to arrange my life so that my children, even though I was practicing law, I was very close to them, and they were never neglected. I say [laughing]. Turn the tape off for a moment, please.

INTERVIEW STOPS

INTERVIEW CONTINUES

AF Returning to the interview. So, you set it up so that it was your own business, initially?

LL Yes.

AF Did you have assistance?

LL I had a secretary. And beginning two or three years after I'd opened my office I had an articling student, and most other years after that I had an articling student. My first office was over the Toronto Dominion Bank at the corner of Yonge and St. Clair, and then in 1964 I moved to the library building. I had some time in there. Another lawyer came in to work for me. I had two lawyers working for me for a while. In 1973 my husband came back into private practice. He had been with the federal government, and then we sort of had junior lawyers always from then on.

AF So what was the name of the firm initially?

LL It's always been Legge and Legge.

AF [Laughs] OK. So it's always been—

LL My husband was always going to quit his job with the government, and come back and, then they'd keep having have him doing other things, and finally in 1973 he did come back.

AF And how large would the office have been initially?

LL In 1956?

AF Yes.

LL Oh, it was very small. It was just one office, and one waiting, a small waiting room, with place for a secretary, it was a secretary/receptionist.

AF Right. Could you describe the décor? Often, at this time, it is described as quite different from now—

LL Well, I [laughs], I always had an office with a rug on the floor and drapes.

AF [laughs] Oh, nice.

LL Yes. And I always had it, it was always tidy and clean. So, I don't have drapes now, but it's the first office I have had without drapes.

AF [laughs] What about the type of equipment you would have had at that time?

LL Well, we had, I had a dictating machine which in 1956 was quite something. It wasn't a lovely little machine like that [indicating the three inch square walkman recording the interview], it was about six inches tall and a foot wide [laughs] and had huge tapes, and I used to dictate into it and my secretary would do all of her work from the tapes. And I think that that was about it. We had electric, we had an electric typewriter by that time. There was nothing else. We didn't have fax machines. They didn't come in until, what, I don't know, twenty years ago.

AF Right, so quite recently?

LL Yes.

AF What kinds of hours would you have worked (you have described to some extent what they would have been)?

LL Yes, I worked, I would work evenings, but I would take work home to do. If I had to go back to the office, excuse me, [coughs] I would put the children to bed and go back to the office at 8 o'clock and work until midnight [laughs] many nights, yes. If I worked Saturdays, which I did often, my children would come to the office with me, and it was a great event: we would all have lunch together!

AF And did you have holidays in the early years? Were you able to take time off?

LL Yes. What we did, we'd go for a couple of years and then we'd go off to England for a few weeks. It was very difficult with small children. And we always left people, they would stay home with proper help.

AF Were you able to fly, or did you have to take [a ship]?

LL In 1951 we went to England on the Queen Mary over and back. In 1953 we went over on a, we were at the Coronation, and everything was booked, and we went over on a ship, and I can't even remember the name of it, and we came back on the Liberte, which was a French ship. And then in '58 we flew to England, and that was an experience [laughs], because flying, you fly to New York, we flew to, it landed in Sydney, it landed in Gander, we finally got to England.

AF Hopping across! [laughs]

LL Yes. Things have certainly changed. Yes, but we've been to England many times.

AF And how did you come to choose this particular area – this Yonge/St. Clair area – that you're in? Was there any particular reason for the choice?

LL I don't know, I—

AF Did you have existing clients in this area?

LL No, no. It was just a very convenient area. We liked it, and we bought our first house on Delisle Avenue and...

AF And what were your practice areas in your early years?

LL In my early years? Oh, I did a little bit of everything: real estate work, of course you don't get much estate work when you're that young, but I drew wills, I did-- When I opened my office my office at Yonge and St. Clair it was very interesting. Within a very few years I realized that many of the businessmen around the corner had become clients.

AF Oh, right.

LL And the one thing I noticed clients were completely unconcerned by your gender. All they cared about was the kind of work you did for them. I did some litigation. Lawyers did a bit of everything: family law, divorce work, and in a very few years I was extremely busy. So that's how it developed. And your law practice, and I'm sure it's the same today, you build a practice by referrals. Advertising – and I have always said it's a waste of time and money – the only advertisement in the practice of law that is worthwhile are clients satisfied with your work telling their friends and relatives.

AF And going from there?

LL Yes.

AF Now, what about your law school friends or other lawyers you knew: did they ever direct business your way?

LL Yes, I, we had friends – I'm thinking in particular of a very good friend of my husband's, who was one of his classmates, who was a senior lawyer. Well, he wasn't at the time, but he was working at Imperial Oil down the way, and his whole career was with Imperial Oil, and he used to send people there used to go to him and want a lawyer, and he used to send them over to me, that sort of thing, yes—

AF So they did send over work?

LL Yes.

AF So what about the other way: did you send over work that—?

LL Oh yes. Absolutely. After I became busy, I couldn't be out of the office. So I stopped doing any litigation. And Phelan O'Brien did all of my litigation for many years.

AF So when would that have started?

LL I'm not certain. But I know that when Robert Rutherford was appointed to the bench, they were certainly doing all of my litigation, and continued to do it for some years after. I suppose I probably stopped when my son came into the practice, and I had lawyers working for me who did litigation and that was in the early '80s, it started.

AF And how did you know the firm [Phelan O'Brien]?

LL The firm Phelan O'Brien?

AF Yes.

LL Well, of course, everybody knew Brendan O'Brien. He was a very famous counsel, a brilliant lawyer, a wonderful man, and still is. And Robert Rutherford was a personal friend, and we knew him, so it was a natural fit. And of course they had Michael O'Brien who was doing criminal work. They had a wonderful group of lawyers there. Wayne Cipollone who was just first class. They really had superb lawyers in that firm, when they were still Phelan O'Brien. And they did marvellous work for my clients. And they ended up doing everything: my matrimonial work, my...

AF Right. Great. Now, just to return to your early years: you said that when you articulated you had some experience in running a business.

LL Yes.

AF Did you have anybody to help you in your early years as you got the business off the ground: people with business sense?

LL Yes. Shortly, very shortly after I opened my office, a year or two perhaps. At first I was doing my own bookkeeping. I hired a professional bookkeeper and, of course, you always have to have a chartered accountant in the practice of law, and you did even then, and I had a very good accountant whom I had for years. And so, yes, we have you must have, a chartered accountant in the practice of law. You always have to keep your books correct.

AF And would you say that the nature of your work has changed over the years, as you've described. What about your clients? Do you think that the clients you've had over the years have changed?

LL Well, I don't know. I have, clients that I have are clients that I've had now for forty-five years, forty years. Now, I have clients come in who say do you realize I'm the third generation of my family you've looked after.

[laughter]

AF That's wonderful.

LL Yes. And you look after families and it goes on. And I am now finding at my age that people are getting very agitated about my demise [laughs] and I say, "I'm not going to be here forever" so-- But I have certainly have a son and a daughter-in-law and junior lawyers who if I drop dead it wouldn't be long before I wouldn't be missed. I've looked after that and I do have a responsibility to see that the practice can carry on.

[laughs]

AF Yes, I understand. And now what about as a businessperson in relation to the Law Society: in the years that you've been dealing with the Law Society, would you say that there is more paperwork involved in dealing with the Law Society?

LL Absolutely. A great deal.

AF Could you describe--?

LL Well, we have the various forms [laughs]-- It's alright, I have a bookkeeper who does them mostly, and I look them over and sign them. However, I'm wearing two hats there. I don't think that they are too onerous and I think they are necessary. It's alright: I'm not complaining.

AF Sure. And membership and insurance costs have changed over the time you've been practicing.

LL Actually, when I started to practice law very few lawyers had insurance. As a matter of fact, I don't think, it was completely unheard of for lawyers to be insured against negligence. And I probably was one of the first lawyers who had negligence insurance and it was a private matter. And the insurance company, and I forget who it was that I went with, but they were very happy to insure a woman lawyer because they knew that we wouldn't, they thought we were so careful and competent. There were so few of us. It was quite a compliment! And for, I had \$100,000 coverage, and, mind you, that was a lot of money forty-five years ago, and it cost me two hundred dollars a year. And then when the Law Society, I always had my own insurance coverage, and then the Law Society made it mandatory, and times have changed in the insurance world. And we have now had, in the good old days if a lawyer made a mistake and another lawyer detected it, the first thing you did you called that lawyer and you would say, "I think you

have made a mistake.” And we would all work together to correct the mistake, and I can think of, there are lawyers today who are my age or younger who can recount tales of our helping each other out, and I can think of one lawyer who made, I can think of two lawyers, who made very serious mistakes and we worked it out so that the clients were protected, and everything was done. Nowadays if a lawyer makes a mistake the usual is another lawyer, even if it’s a supposed mistake, instead of calling and saying, “What happened?” which is what always happened, we’d call the other lawyer immediately, and usually you would find out that what the lawyer, what the client perceived as a mistake, was, in fact, not a mistake. Today, the first a lawyer will hear of it is that another lawyer has issued a claim against him. And the courtesy has gone from the profession to the detriment of our clients. And also to the detriment of our insurance policies. And I hate to say it, but I have the perception that there are lawyers who are making their living suing other lawyers, frequently with spurious lawsuits. If you, a phone call and go and see the file they would realize that there is no claim. That isn’t the way it’s now practiced. This is one, one development in our profession that I deplore and I suppose that it could have been foreseen when we had mandatory insurance, that you would have the unprincipled lawyers who would take advantage of it.

AF Yes, yes. You don’t-- Sorry.

LL It really is, to me, quite shocking. Because we used to, every lawyer we are human, we will all make mistakes. But usually if, if you miss a limitation period there’s a problem, and that’s a mistake that would be very hard to rectify. But certainly in the field of real estate, this sort of thing-- [pause] We could correct it, and we did all the time.

AF Do you think that perhaps the sheer number of lawyers now makes a difference as well? That you don't know one another, or of another?

LL No, I think that what has happened is that our-- I personally, and perhaps it's my age, I think our public morality has deteriorated. I think that the, I think that there is too much in our profession today of avarice: making money, rather than serving the client. In our day, I started to law, I started to practice law long before there was Legal Aid. And the average lawyer pre-1966 would say to you that no person has come into my office who needed legal assistance who didn't get it because they couldn't pay. We did it: that was our professional responsibility.

AF How do you think you learned that: did you learn about it in articling, or was it talked about at law school?

LL No. It was something that, we were a profession. And that was just part of our whole culture in our profession.

AF Where did you learn that, though?

LL I just don't know. I just knew it. You know, I knew it. I suppose my upbringing and everything I had ever known. You looked after people.

AF Yes. Yes.

LL And the, to my mind one of the worst things that has happened to our profession is this business of docketing time.

AF Right.

LL Time is only one small factor. And now there are young lawyers who know of no way to charge except with dockets. Now this is a deplorable situation, to my mind. I say it all the time.

AF So what were your billing practices, then? Did you--?

LL My billing practices then and still are: time is only one small factor. Because, if you are an experienced lawyer, you know the law, you know what to do immediately. The value of the work to the client, the complication of the task, the time spent is a small factor. Result for the client. Value of the work. These are all important factors. As a matter of fact, I was rather interested, I had never looked before, in recent years, I see in the preamble to the Toronto Lawyers' Suggested Tariff of Fees, the very things that have always been considered the way to bill. And the other thing that's terribly important: to look at the client. You don't, I don't have a blanket fee for a will, for goodness sake! If an old age pensioner with an estate of \$10,000 comes in you charge them very little, just a nominal fee so that they don't lose their pride. And you have to gear your fees really to the clients to a large extent, if you're a professional person. You don't cheat anyone, and you don't overcharge anyone, but you undercharge many times when people have no money. And I think that that is a part of being a profession. And it is a sad thing that we're losing, that this nonsense about having to docket every minute of the day. I don't, I haven't, and I have no intention of starting...

[laughter]

LL ... at my age! [laughs] [pause] I say, if you only base it on that, then the slowest, and the most unlearned lawyers are the most expensive.

AF Yes, yes. Now, one last area I'd like to ask you about is if in your early years of practice you participated in a professional organization?

LL Yes, I did. Very much so, in the Women's Law Association.

AF Right. And when would you have joined that?

LL In 1945, when I became a law student.

AF Oh, that early? And why did you join?

LL Well, that was our profession-- We just joined it, we all did. All women law students and lawyers joined it. And we were all automatically members, and we paid our fees.

AF Oh, I see.

LL Oh yes, and it was at that time-- Perhaps you've read some of the speeches I've made? The legal profession was a very discreet profession: we had the Lawyers' Club for male lawyers, the Women's Club for female lawyers, the Reading Society for Jewish lawyers, the Thomas Moore for Roman Catholic lawyers. It was hilarious when you look back on it.

AF Yes.

LL But, you know, it was funny. You didn't complain. We didn't care.

AF Right. And what did participation in the—

LL Women's Law Association—

AF Yes.

LL Yes. It was our support group for each other and we helped each other. And I think of young women they were just starting, and I can think of one woman who just died, and when she wanted to start her own practice and, you know, I gave her enough work to keep her busy and to pay her rent. And we helped each other, and we supported each other. And at any given time I could call Mabel Van Camp and say I have a family law problem, and she was an expert, and we helped each other, and advised each other.

AF Right, right.

LL And lawyers would call me with real estate problems. Well, lawyers still do, male and female. But we knew each other, and we were all friends.

AF So it was moral and practical support as you went through?

LL Oh, yes. Oh, yes. It was our, it was our club, it was our legal club. Because we weren't allowed to join the lawyers' club, or the other male clubs.

AF And the numbers would have been quite small, so you would all have known one another?

LL That's right. At a Christmas party when we would turn out sort of en masse we would be fortunate to have twenty-four.

AF Oh, that's very few.

LL Well, there were very few women practicing.

AF And did you join the Toronto Lawyers' Club when they accepted women later on?

LL No [laughing], I didn't. And when I became the Treasurer of the Law Society I was invited to speak to the Lawyer's Club and then, I didn't, I guess I knew that they had women lawyers then, but I wasn't interested at that stage in joining anything, and when I became Treasurer I was asked to speak and my good friend Bill Bailey called me and said. "Laura, you're not a member." And I said "No," and he gave me a membership! And I thought I was terribly funny. When I spoke to them I told them that my only experience with the Lawyers' Club was when they had ladies' night and my husband would take me, and [laughs] he had taken me one time, and a lawyer by the name of Kidd had sat across from me, and kept sending me, writing jokes and sending

them across the table to me and I kept laughing, and my husband was so embarrassed he said he'd never take me again!

[laughter]

LL And, in any event, I told them that, like Groucho Marx, a club that would have me wasn't worth joining, and even though Bill Bailey had paid my fees, and I wouldn't pay them again. I don't think, unless my bookkeeper pays them, I don't think I have!

[laughter]

LL Anyway, so be it.

AF When you, years later, when you were Treasurer, a lot was made of you being the first woman, and you were the first woman bencher, and so forth. In your early years as a lawyer, was there any interest shown in you by the media or women's organizations in the fact that you were a woman and practicing?

LL Yes. Always. Yes, because I was practicing and I was a mother and they would call up and I would say, and it was sort of amusing, because there was, there were so few of us who were doing it.

AF Would they have been women's magazines? Do you remember any of them in particular?

LL Oh... I can't remember, really. I was never interested in publicity. I never cared and so...

AF But it has been a fairly persistent theme throughout your career?

LL That's right. They've been interested. But not anymore, because now there are more women than male lawyers.

AF Yes.

LL It's old hat.

AF It's all changed.

LL Yes.

AF And the last question I'd like to ask you today if you felt any sense – thinking of you talking earlier of the Women's Law Association and the importance of moral support and practical assistance – did you feel an obligation towards women coming up behind you, to assist them in the profession? Was that something you were aware of?

LL Yes, I have always encouraged women to go into law if they felt they wanted to. I have always been able to say to them it's a profession, it's a wonderful profession, and you can do it, and enjoy it. And I have always encouraged women, I have always tried to help them. Over the years I have been a mentor for many young women who have started their own practice. I have tried to and even forgotten some of the ones that I have tried to help over the years. You know, years have gone on.

AF Yes.

LL But I was extremely interested a few years ago, Maureen Kempston Darkes, who has become a very famous corporate president at General Motors, was at the Law Society (I wasn't there), and Harvey Strosberg, who was the Treasurer, said that Maureen told him that I had been an inspiration to her and I thought, "What in the world!" And it turns out-- I met Maureen subsequently and she said when she was a student, I took her out to lunch and I told her she could be anything she wanted to be, just to get on with it!

[laughter]

LL And she hadn't forgotten it. And that's what she had done.

AF Yes. Wonderful.

LL And that's it. My experience was you don't become obsessed with discrimination and problems: just work around them, and get on with life!

AF Yes, yes. Great. Well, thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW

LAURA LEGGE INTERVIEW #3

DATE: JULY 21, 2004

**PLACE: LEGGE AND LEGGE, BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS
65 ST. CLAIR AVE. E., TORONTO**

INTERVIEWER: ALISON FORREST

**MEDIA: 2 MINI-DISKS APPROX. 58:41 AND 48:23 MINUTES IN LENGTH,
AND VIDEO RECORDING OF SAME**

AF This is Alison Forrest speaking interviewing Mrs. Laura Legge for the Law Society. Today is the twenty-first of July, 2004. This is interview number three.

....

AF Now, today I wanted to ask you about your experiences as a bencher and Treasurer for the Law Society of Upper Canada, and I wanted to start first with your experiences as a bencher. What year were you first elected as a bencher?

LL 1975.

AF '75. Had you put your name forward previously, or was that the first time that you stood for nomination?

LL No, that was the first time.

AF I was wondering why you decided to run for bencher?

LL I can't answer that. I don't know.

AF OK. [laughs]

LL Well that's not quite true. For a number of years we had wanted to have a woman bencher, and had never been successful. Margaret Hyndman had almost made it, and should have been. In the days when there were fifteen benchers, she was number sixteen, and when one of the benchers was appointed to the bench-- Do you want to turn that off-- [telephone rings]

INTERRUPTION

INTERVIEW RESUMES

LL Margaret Hyndman should have moved in but there was no requirement that the bencher with the next number of votes be moved in, so they skipped her and appointed a man. And they then changed the rules or the legislation, I don't know which, so that now the next person in line, with the next number of votes, automatically becomes a bencher. So that in 1975 I decided to run, the women wanted to have a woman bencher, and I decided that perhaps I had a chance because I had been practicing for some time, and I knew a lot of lawyers, and it transpired that that was so. I was elected.

AF Great. When would Margaret Hyndman have been running?

LL It was in the 1960s.

AF Right.

LL It was in the 1960s.

AF Right. Thanks. Prior to becoming a bencher had you had any dealings with the Law Society other than your ordinary professional--?

LL No.

AF So nothing to ease you into the role of bencher?

LL No.

AF And you knew some of the benchers already at this time: who were they? You said some of them you had actually graduated with, so they were the year of '48.

LL Yes, there were. Yes, there was John Pallett, and I think Norman Rodgers was a bencher, Bob Rutherford, and Brendan O'Brien, and I don't know who else.

AF Right. I was wondering in terms of your life, your life, whether the timing of your running for bencher coincided with a time in your life when you had more availability of time for whatever reason, work or personal commitments.

LL Yes, my children were all in university or, yes they were all in university in 1975. Only one of them was still living at home so I had more time, I had more personal time, yes.

AF Right, and we'll be discussing this as we said in the next interview – the nature of your non-legal committee work – but I was wondering if you were committed otherwise to other committees at this time, or if that had eased up as well?

LL In 1975 I was very active in a woman's service club, the Soroptimist Club. As a matter of fact, I was the President that year. And, yes, I was very busy.

AF Right. But, nonetheless, you found the time. To return to your nomination to bencher: I was wondering how one goes about achieving support for nomination, the mechanics of being elected?

LL There's no problem being nominated. I had, as I recall, my nomination papers, ten male friends nominated me, and there was, it was really a lot of fun. There was great enthusiasm amongst my male colleagues who knew me as a lawyer. And in March of 1975 I went off to England and didn't realize that I was supposed to be campaigning. [laughs] I went to England to visit my daughter who was a student at Cambridge, and my husband sent out letters to lawyers he knew. But, people who, you're elected a bencher, because people who know you vote for you and ask their friends to vote for you, because they think, hopefully they think, you will do a good job in governing the profession.

AF Yes. Yes. So you headed off to England, and didn't realize that you were supposed to be campaigning. Was anybody at home doing work for you?

LL Well, my husband was here.

AF Was he actively—?

LL Well, yes, he did. He sent off letters. I wasn't aware that he was doing it, but he did. Which was very nice of him. [laughs]

AF And you said that a lot of people knew you at this point in your professional career?

LL Yes, I'd been practicing since 1948 and I knew hundreds of lawyers. Yes.

AF Yes, yes. Were you aware of who, or which organizations, may have supported you?

LL No. There were really no organizations who supported me.

AF So individual lawyers?

LL Yes, it was individual lawyers. Well, there, one very good friend that we had was John Parry who was a senior partner at McCarthy and McCarthy. And John certainly was a great support of me and campaigned for me, and campaigned at McCarthy and McCarthy I heard. He didn't tell me, but I heard one of the lawyers there said he stood up at a meeting, and asked them to vote for me. He is a very close friend. A marvellous human being.

AF So you weren't here. I was going to ask you if, in some way, you had indicated your interests and priorities were for the Law Society. If people knew you, then they would know what it was you represented?

LL Well, you see this is, you become a bencher at the Law Society not in the, with your agenda, but in the interest, in the public interest. And I knew always knew that, I was there, and it was always my view that I was going to go to see that the public was provided with honest, competent lawyers. And I was always concerned that lawyers served the public well. And that was my agenda.

AF Right, okay. Now, we had talked about this before: you've attracted a great deal of public interest over the years in your career as a lawyer, as a woman, and then as a wife and mother. Did the degree of interest in you change, or increase, once you became a bencher?

LL Well, I suppose so. I, I was never interested in a public profile. I was asked to speak a great deal to various groups, which I did. I gave many speeches. I don't, yes, it did change. People were interested. But, they wouldn't be the slightest bit interested today, but it was sort of the situation where you were the first woman there and so they

were interested in some woman who was married and a mother who was doing this.

Today they wouldn't pay the slightest attention to it, because [laughs] it's now old hat.

AF When was the next woman bencher elected?

LL Four years later.

AF Fours years later. Was that—

LL It was Trudy Orman and Mary, sorry, I'm having a mental break. Two benchers. Two women were elected.

AF At that time, there wouldn't have been a separate room for woman benchers because there was just you!

[laughter]

LL Yes, it was interesting. We used the Barrister's Robing Room, which was a very small room, and they very shortly after I was elected had a room, a separate room for women benchers, and I was terribly amused. They had eight lockers and I said, "You're silly, because in a very few years, there will be many women benchers", because there were so many women who were beginning to be called to the Bar. And, of course, I was right. I thought they needed about thirty lockers. [laughs]

AF Yes. Eight: it probably seemed like a large number at the time, perhaps! [laughs] In terms of the expectations of benchers: the time commitment, and attendance and committee work what were those expectations?

LL I don't know what the expectations were, but I can tell you that from the time I was elected, I was spending twenty-five percent of my days on Law Society work at Osgoode Hall.

AF This was your work day?

LL Yes. Twenty-five. I estimated at least a week of every month was spent at Convocation, committees, or on discipline hearings. At least a week a month.

AF Yes, a very heavy commitment.

LL Sometimes it was more than that.

AF Right. Other than your attendance at Convocation and committee work, were there any other formal engagements as a benchers that you were required to attend?

LL No.

AF Did you find the time commitment onerous, in terms of the other responsibilities that you had?

AF Well, it didn't bother me. I suppose it was onerous. But it wasn't, I enjoyed what I was doing everywhere. So it was, it was no effort.

AF Sure. So, it was 25% of your work time: how did you fit your other work commitments into this? Did you have to ease them off, or how did you go about—?

LL No. [laughs] I worked evenings, I had, I would work until midnight many evenings during the week, I worked Saturdays, I would work Sundays. You just extended your day and your work time.

AF The committees that you were on as a benchers: were you able to choose the committee work you were involved in, out of interest? Or, were there other ways that you became a member of a committee?

LL I can't remember. But I was on Unauthorized Practice, which was of great interest to me. I was on the Admissions Committee, which was of interest to me, and I was on, I can't remember what other committees.

AF Small firms?

LL Yes, and I was interested in those. And I think that in my, as a lawyer in a small firm, I realized the danger of persons giving legal advice who weren't authorized to do it. I saw some of the problems that arose.

AF In your early years as a bencher I was wondering if there was a particular moment when you raised an issue that was important to you.

LL No.

AF Now, this is what thirty-one years ago, when you were first elected a bencher: could you describe the formality of the proceedings at the time when you were elected bencher?

LL It was twenty-nine years, if I may correct you!

AF Oh yes, my math is not working today!

LL No, things were conducted much the same as they are now. There's been very little change. It was, Convocation was very formal. And many meetings were not quite as formal as Convocation, but it's much the same as it is today. There's been very little change in the way meetings are conducted.

AF I was going to ask you if the numbers of Convocation in that time, the lay benchers--

LL I think that one of the changes that I have noticed-- In the early days, of course, Convocation was not open to the public. The level of debate, in my view, was a much higher level of debate. People were not playing for the press, and they weren't playing for an audience. They spoke, they spoke succinctly and well, they got to the point, they weren't putting on a show for anybody. It was to contribute to the discussion,

and the debate, and there was a very high level of debate. And I have observed that there is a lot of time wasted because so many benchers feel that they must speak. And in those days if everything had been said, you didn't need to get up and speak. You showed your support, or non-support, by your vote when everything had been said and the arguments had been made. And that is one sorry change I see in Convocation. But we've had some excellent Treasurers in recent years who have moved Convocation along, and have stopped a lot of the wasted time.

AF Right. I've been told that in Convocation particular benchers always sit in the same place, and I was wondering if you had a place that you always sat in.

LL Well, former Treasurers, that's just a tradition we always, as soon as you've stopped being Treasurer, you don't sit around the table. You sit back against the wall, and usually the east wall, somewhere. So we all sit together along the east wall.

AF I didn't know that. And somebody sits under their portrait: is that you? Is that--?

LL No.

AF Perhaps it is Mr. O'Brien. And you always sit in the same place?

LL No, the same general area.

[laughter]

AF How would you describe your participation in Convocation? Were you fairly vocal?

LL No, never have been. I only speak if I have something to contribute. I have never felt compelled to speak uselessly. I have never felt compelled to speak to be heard. But if I have something to say, I certainly say it. So, [laughs] and on occasion I have

been very vocal, but usually I will only speak if I have what I consider to be something important.

AF Would you be one of the few solicitors in--?

LL Yes. Yes, there are more now, but there were very few of us when I was first elected. The out-of-town benchers tend to be solicitors. You know John Pallett, Gordon Farquharson... There were more solicitors from out-of-town.

AF Is there a difference in the way they participate—?

LL I don't think so. I've never detected any difference. [pause] No, I don't think so.

AF Did you find over the years that there were benchers who tended to share your views fairly consistently?

LL [pause] Yes, that's true.

AF Groups of--?

LL Yes, yes. The one lay bencher who shared my views always was June Callwood. I think everyone was a bit surprised [laughs], but June Callwood was a very sensible, very good lay bencher, and it was a pity she only stayed for four years, in my view...

AF And were there any others that you would say fairly consistently shared your views?

LL No, I don't think so. I never thought much about it. You know...

AF You sat in the same room with a number of the same people for close to thirty years: you must know one another quite well?

LL Yes.

AF So you were there to work, but how would you describe the atmosphere of Convocation?

LL It's very pleasant, collegial. You're not there generally, you know, I think generally the atmosphere is generally that you're there for a higher purpose. And you're not there for yourself: you're there to see the profession is well governed. And the public interest is paramount, absolutely.

AF I had wanted to ask you what you perceive the role of Convocation to be, so I guess you've really just answered that. It's protection of the public—

LL It is indeed. You're not, and I said, I said when I was Treasurer: we are not a union for lawyers. We are there to see that the public, that the profession is governed so that the public has access. I'm very concerned about access to justice, that people have access to affordable legal services, and honest lawyers, and competent lawyers.

AF In terms of achieving all of those things: what would the hardest or most difficult part of Convocation towards achieving those goals?

LL I'm sorry, I didn't—

AF What would be the most difficult part of Convocation toward achieving those goals?

LL I don't know. I can't, I'm afraid I can't answer that question because I don't think that Convocation-- Convocation and benchers work on it consistently.

AF Yes. Sure. Now Convocation has changed a great deal since you were first elected bencher: we were talking about numbers of benchers, there are now lay benchers.

LL Well, there are no more elected benchers, there are the same number of benchers, but there are now more lay benchers. There are four, we now have eight lay benchers, and we had four then.

AF And possibly a more diverse group of lawyers? Even just more women...

LL Yes.

AF Has that changed Convocation at all, or is it essentially the same?

LL I don't think so. To my mind there isn't a perceptible change. The only change, as I said earlier, was in the debates. I think that the level of debates isn't as high as it was when we had a closed Convocation.

AF Right.

LL We didn't, you know, as I said, we didn't have people who felt compelled to speak because the audience out there needed to hear them.

AF I would like now to turn to your years as Treasurer. You were elected Treasurer of the Law Society of Upper Canada in 1983, is that right?

LL Correct.

AF And that was for two years?

LL You're elected for one year. And then in 1984, June, I was re-elected for one more year.

AF Right. OK. I wanted to ask you the same question as when I asked you about being a bencher: what motivated you to run for Treasurer?

LL There was a reason there. I was very concerned because there had been a proposal and legislation had been drafted to change the discipline process. And it was, the proposal was that discipline, the discipline committee, would make the final, the

ultimate decision, to disbar and the only appeal from that committee would be to the courts. And I felt that this was wrong, and I was very concerned about that. And I felt that the only way that I could have any influence to stop it would be if I became the Treasurer. And that was why I ran as Treasurer. And when I became Treasurer the Attorney General called me, who was Roy McMurry, now Chief Justice, and I have great praise for his role as Attorney General while I was Treasurer. He was wonderful.

AF He was Attorney General for the two years [you were Treasurer]?

LL Yes, he was. He was the Attorney General for the two years. He was cooperative, sensible. My secretary at the Law Society would call his secretary and say I had a problem, and within an hour or two there'd be a call back, "When could I meet him"? He would make himself available. And when I was elected Treasurer, within three days he telephoned me, and said he would like to see me and he wanted to discuss the legislation that was before the government. And I said, "I want to talk to you, because I'm very much opposed to it." And I felt that to go from the committee to the courts-- And he concurred, and that was stopped. And now of course, we do have amendments since then, but it's very sensible, because it goes from the three-man panel of Convocation to an appeal panel, of I guess it's ten benchers, which is very sensible. And you can then, if you want to appeal, you've had an appeal, and if you want to appeal you can then go to the court, but it doesn't go immediately to the courts. Because the way, the way the proposal back in 1983, the courts would have been clogged with every lawyer who was disciplined going over to the Divisional Court. So that, if you want to know why I wanted to be Treasurer, that's why.

AF Was there any other reason other than—?

LL No, that was it.

AF No, sorry. Along the same lines: any other reason other than sheer number of lawyers going on appeal to the courts, or was it appropriate for—

LL No. I, we, it is, the benchers are elected to govern the profession—

AF Yes, that's what I meant.

LL -and we were going to give up our autonomy! We were going to turn it over to the courts, which I understand in many states of the United States is where discipline of the profession is. And I felt that we were competent to discipline ourselves.

AF Yes. Thank you. Getting back to being elected: were you involved in this campaign? You weren't in the country the last time, when you became bencher—

LL No. In those years, when you ran for Treasurer, there was no campaign. We did not campaign. I certainly didn't. I just told people I was running, and I was nominated, and they could vote for me, or not. I asked no one to support me. And we didn't in those years. It just wasn't done.

AF Right. OK. Do you have any ideas who your main supporters were? Were they individuals again or was there maybe—

LL Well, there were fifty-one benchers, four who were voted that's benchers and former Treasurers and Attorney Generals who then voted, there were four women and I do know of the four women -- there were two lay benchers and two elected benchers -- and the two lay benchers voted for me, and one of the elected benchers who were women voted for me, and one of the elected women did not vote for me. And you knew this, and it was alright, it was a free vote. So thirty-one benchers voted for me and sixteen voted for, for Pierre Genest. Forty-seven voted. And Pierre was a wonderful fellow, but the

problem was he had only been a benchner for two years, and he should not have been running as to be Treasurer: he hadn't been there long enough. And then he, after me he did become the Treasurer.

AF How do they announce—?

LL No, they just read out in Convocation who the nominations are for Treasurer. And then we have the vote, and the votes are counted as they come in, and the Secretary gives the tally, in Convocation.

AF How did you feel when you became Treasurer?

LL I don't know. [laughs] I suppose it was a bit exciting. I, to be perfectly candid with you, I felt terribly sorry for Pierre Genest and my election was very much tempered with my heart going out to Pierre, who was a friend of mine and a wonderful fellow. And it was sort of sad, and I thought that the people who had persuaded him to run were very ill-advised because the benchers, and the only reason he wasn't elected was that he'd been there such a short time-- And so, you know... We're all friends and it was too bad. However, that's life.

AF Once you are made Treasurer is there a swearing in ceremony?

LL No, nothing of the sort. Just sit in the chair and start running Convocation.

[laughter]

AF Did you get any assistance from any previous Treasurers, or the previous Treasurer?

LL Very much so. I had, whenever there was a serious problem I could call on Brendan O'Brien, who was absolutely wonderful. The other person, I had sort of an executive committee of my own: there was John Robinette, Brendan O'Brien, Stuart

Thom (who was just marvellous): they were three former Treasurers. Barry Pepper, and I could call any of them, any hour of the day or night, and they would be in my office within ten minutes to help me. And they were just wonderful. Of course, George Finlayson, but he was very shortly elected to the bench, or appointed to the bench. And even the former Treasurers who were judges would offer their advice or assistance. I remember William Howland, who was the Chief Justice, who was wonderful. And they, they helped. And you have to seek advice from people who have been there before. And I had it. I remember one problem, I forget what the problem was, and within half an hour Stuart Thom, Brendan O'Brien and Barry Pepper were all in my office. Just like that, they just dropped whatever they were doing and came -- because it was a serious problem for the Law Society -- to give me advice. Yes, I certainly did have advice [laughs] from former Treasurers and colleagues.

AF And not just when you moved into office, but in an ongoing way?

LL Oh yes, at any time. If I wanted help I would call them, or they would proffer advice.

AF Do you think that's the usual practice? Did you do that subsequently for incoming Treasurers?

LL Well, I, we always offer our advice there in Convocation, and I think, I think it's very important that former Treasurers are there because we've had the experience, and I think that life benchers are very important because they've been there long enough, and they know, and they've had the experience. So, I think that it's a good system.

AF You were talking earlier about your assistant, or your secretary: how important is a secretary to the role of Treasurer?

LL Well, no. I had, you know, a secretary secretary who did my typing and opened my mail and brought it around. I went down to the Law Society every morning. I was there from about 9 at least until 1, about 1 at least, longer if, then I would come to my office and, if I had to, I would go back. And I would go through my mail, I answered my mail every day and dealt with problems that might have arisen. Being a Treasurer, even in those years, was a full-time job. But I move very quickly and I think quickly and I was able to do a lot of work in the five hours or four hours I was there, but then I frequently went back in the afternoon. There are, were many evening engagements, and if you were Treasurer and you were called upon, in effect, to represent the Law Society at many other organizations, which was important to do.

AF Was this public speaking, dinners?

LL That's right. I did a lot of public speaking. And I called on a lot of lawyers around the province. They still do. I used to do a lot of the county district associations.

AF Right. That's a lot of work. So, other than those obligations, what were your official obligations as a Treasurer while you were in the office, 9 to 1? So you were answering correspondence--

LL Well, in those years the Treasurer was the Chief Executive Officer of the Law Society. And you were concerned somewhat with administration, although we had an under-Treasurer who was Rendall Dick, who was excellent. And we had Kenneth Jarvis, who had been a Secretary for years. And Kenneth really looked after the professional matters, and Rendell looked after the administration. It was a wonderful division, and they were both there as advisors and helpers, and even if I came back to my office I was on the other end of the telephone, and if they had any problems they could call me.

AF Right. And Ken Jarvis had been with the Law Society for many years.

LL Many years. Great experience, yes.

AF What about Rendell Dick?

LL He had not been there. He had only been there a few years, but then he had great experience as a deputy Attorney General, and then minister at Queen's Park. So he was a very experienced administrator. And also he was very politically astute because he had been at Queen's Park.

AF Yes, yes. So, again, you had good people to draw on.

LL Now there was one, I do recall. And I think it should be on the record. We had one serious political altercation of sorts. When I first became Treasurer I was summoned before the Committee of the Legislature to answer questions about something or other, and I forget what. And under the *Law Society Act* we are answerable to the Attorney General, and it's through the Attorney General that we are answerable to the legislature. And this committee, the legislature, and I forget which committee it was, summoned us to go up to the legislature to answer questions about something. And I went, and one of the members there, and he was the member from Ottawa -- how could I forget his name? Shawn something or other -- was exceedingly rude to me. [laughs] You know, I answered the questions, but, he, you know, he was just vicious, you know. You would think that I was a member of the opposition. And the one thing that he was on about was our secret Convocations, our secret meetings, as if there was something evil going on behind the closed doors. And you know, I had to be polite and I couldn't lose my temper, although I would like to have. What was his name? Was it Cassidy? Perhaps. I still see him on TVO. He's interviewed, every week he's on a panel with

Janet Eckert, and I forget. He is the liberal from Ottawa. But, anyway, I, I've often thought I'd like to see him sometime privately.

[laughter]

LL But he was quite nasty about the Law Society. And my initial inclination was not to go, but the advice was, well, what did we have to lose? But it was the wrong forum. We should not have been there. And that hasn't happened since. Now the other problem, when I was first elected, and we were getting very concerned about numbers of lawyers, and also I was concerned about the core courses in the law schools that were not being taught. And I'm still concerned about it. And my one concern, and it's an ongoing concern, is the lack of teaching of equity and legal history. And I tried very hard to do something about it. And when I was first elected, I'm sorry, I'm having the, the chap who was a bencher: Mendes da Costa, Derek Mendes da Costa, was a professor at the University of Toronto law school and he was a bencher. And Derek actually came to me, and he, too, was concerned about the same things. And I said, "Let's have a special committee established, and let's look at it, and get some statistics and see what's going on". Well, very shortly after he started, he was appointed to the bench. And Allan Rock was a young bencher and I thought, he was obviously quite talented, and that he could take this on. And I spoke to him about it. But I'm sorry to say it didn't go anywhere. Which is a pity. And every time the Law Society seems to ask the law schools to start teaching some basic courses we get nowhere. I couldn't get anywhere, and I tried very hard. And the one law school that has consistently taught, or have, I don't know if they still do or not, twelve basic courses was the University of Western Ontario. And I think they're still teaching, I know they're still teaching, equity law. And, in my opinion,

having been a lawyer for fifty-six years, if you don't understand the law of equity, as well as the common law, how in the world can you be a lawyer in our legal system? And I think it's a real problem, and I think it's still a problem, and an ongoing problem. And I blame the Law Society for this one because we've allowed the law schools to teach a lot of courses that have really no relevance. And you don't teach people to think like lawyers, you have to give them some tools with which to think! And I had one eminent law dean tell me that their only role was to teach people to think like lawyers. Now come off it! You have to give them some basic tools to start thinking. However... So, that was one of my very real concerns as Treasurer: that was the education of lawyers. I must say I failed: I got nowhere, and nothing has happened since.

AF Was there support in Convocation for this?

LL Well, there was some support. But...

AF If there'd been more support or, what I'm asking is, does it have to do with the relationship between universities and what they teach, and Convocation?

LL We cannot, as a Law Society, we cannot, and I always said this, we cannot tell the law schools what to teach. But we can say whom we will take into the Bar Admission Course. And I said from the word go, we would not take people into the Bar Admission Course who had not had some basic education in the law of equity, the law of evidence. And the thing that absolutely appalled me was that I discovered that we had called to the Bar the year before I think it was, when I was elected Treasurer, I think it was twenty-two students who had never studied evidence. Now you can't even be a solicitor without knowing some evidence. And so then they started teaching evidence for two weeks in the Bar Admission Course. Well, that's not enough. When I was in law

school it was a full year of evidence training and [pause] it's with you, it's part of your foundation as a lawyer. So this was, this was a problem. And, quite frankly, I think it's a problem that still exists. So...

AF You were speaking earlier about your concerns about the numbers of lawyers also?

LL I was concerned then, about the number of lawyers, because I can see problems for the public. I also think it's quite unfair to be calling 1,200 or a 1,000 young people to the Bar and having them go through the onerous task, and cost and time of becoming lawyers, only to find that there is no work for them, and no future for them. And I think that I could see us reaching a saturation point. And we are the only profession that doesn't control numbers. Chartered accountants do, the doctors do, the dentists do, we don't. Now, I felt that our only approach was: Is it in the public interest? And I think it is not in the public interest, because if you have too many lawyers it's pretty simple to see you're going to have litigiousness, and we have. We've now reached that stage, and I'm told, I don't do litigation, but I'm told it's almost impossible now to settle a lawsuit. We have spurious lawsuits being commenced. I can see absolute changes in the way lawsuits are commenced. In the good old days you would call up a lawyer and say, "What about this?" You could sit down, look at the file, and realize there's no cause of action. Not today! No phone call, nothing. You receive a statement of claim. And this is a complete change in the way law is practiced, and I put it down to the fact that there are too many lawyers chasing too little work. So we've become like the Americans, we're very litigious, the courts are clogged, and I think this is not in the public interest. Now I have tried, about five years ago, I moved in Convocation, and it

was seconded or vice versa by Gavin MacKenzie, that we at least look at this and see if there is a problem hurting the public. And it was defeated. They wouldn't even look at it. So that's another problem that I think exists, and is getting nowhere. And I think, when I hear in your year, last year, there are many young lawyers well qualified and can't find employment, perhaps my concerns are being borne out. Because, now I think it's quite unfair for us to say, "Well, go ahead: take your chance." You have invested too much money and too much time. So that's my other concern.

AF Now, another issue: you said that the discipline process first moved you to stand for Treasurer. While you were Treasurer another issue that was raised within the Law Society at that time was advertising, the issue of lawyers advertising?

LL Indeed. Yes. Oh, we had a wonderful debate about advertising [laughs], and we voted on it and the vote was 50 – 50 so I had to cast the deciding vote, and I voted against advertising. So I, now advertising is now there and people can now advertise. I think it's demeaning to the profession to have advertising, and it's something that, the only way you build a practice as a lawyer is by referrals. Now, the argument against it is, well, how is the public to know? Well, you know, you used to ask your bank manager and you can ask your relatives and your friends. Everybody has a lawyer to whom they referred their relatives and friends who needed a lawyer. And clients who are worthwhile do not come through advertising, I can tell you.

AF So the vote, the hung vote, would that have been 1983 – your first year? – because *Jabour* was 1982?

LL I think it was '83.

AF It followed. That would make sense.

LL Yes, I think so. It was really early on.

AF And thinking of *Jabour* here, the Supreme Court of Canada case about advertising and the Law Society, there were other prominent law cases around this time – while you were Treasurer – including *Skapinker*, on the mobility issue.

LL Oh yes, indeed. Yes, yes, yes.

AF Brendan O'Brien appeared for the Law Society on that: could you tell me something about that?

LL Was it while I was Treasurer?

AF I believe it was 1984.

LL I don't recall. I can't help you, I'm sorry.

AF OK. Were there any other prominent cases that came up at that time, for the Law Society?

LL I'm not recalling. I'm sorry.

AF I'm going to be speaking to Mr. O'Brien about his role in acting as counsel for the Law Society, but I wanted to ask you, also, how as a Treasurer it worked, as a case came up?

LL You mean how would you choose a lawyer to defend it?

AF Well, I mean your role as Treasurer on a law case for the Law Society.

LL Well, really, what you wanted to make certain was that a lawyer representing the Law Society was the best in the field!

AF Right.

LL And that is why we had Brendan O'Brien. And I remember one time, and I don't remember what the issue was, but we had to have the Attorney General of Ontario

and the Law Society was on the same side on some issue, and I spoke to Mr. McMurtry, and he named the lawyers that he would choose, and strangely enough there was one that I would have chosen that we had in common. So for whatever the problem was, you wanted the lawyer who was the leader in that sort of law, to look after the interest of the Law Society, which was really looking after the interest of the public. So... And Brendan O'Brien was an absolutely, was a very clever man, was an excellent counsel. As was John Robinette, who was a brilliant man.

AF Did he represent the Law Society as well?

LL I don't know. Not in my day, he didn't. But apparently he had before. And they were both former Treasurers, both brilliant counsel.

AF As Treasurer, what was your involvement in working with counsel for—

LL Er—

AF Was there a committee?

LL Very little, very little. You know because they would work with, they would get their instructions, they would work with the Secretary who would know about any problems.

AF This would be Ken Jarvis?

LL Yes. Of course if they wanted to know anything they could speak to me. Now, as Treasurer, at that time I was quite involved in the head of our discipline department who was Steve --? Sorry, oh dear, it's not my day! And he would come and ask me about very serious cases. And while I was Treasurer we had the great scandal about the apartment scams, you would have heard of that: it was where the apartment flips. They would sell an apartment building for \$5M and immediately have a false, or

they would buy it for \$5M, and then they would have a false offer and sell it for ten. And they would go to these trust companies: there was Seaway Trust, and I forget the others, would put mortgages on them for five million or six or seven, and of course the buildings were worth \$5M mortgage than they were worth, and they cleaned out all the trust companies. There was Morgan Trust, Seaway Trust, and I forget the others. And the trust companies of course went bankrupt, eventually, because all the money was taken out, and into the hands of the people who eventually went to prison. But we had lawyers who were involved in playing this game, and I was very much involved in giving instructions. And it was a field of law that I certainly understood what was going on. Steve Sherriff was the discipline...

END OF DISK ONE

BEGINNING OF DISK TWO

AF This is the second tape, interviewing Mrs. Laura Legge for the Law Society. Interview number three. Alison Forrest speaking. It's the twenty-first of July, 2004.

....

AF Just to continue, we were talking about your experiences as Treasurer for the Law Society of Upper Canada, and we had covered a number of important issues that arose during your two years as Treasurer. Just to move on from there, I wanted to ask you having been a Treasurer, and now as a Life bencher, if that has affected your role as bencher?

LL Oh yes, I think so. I think that the, you're more inclined to allow the elected benchers to carry the weight of debate in Convocation, for example, and you only intervene if you feel you have something significant to add. You don't enter into the fray

of the debate the way you would have when you were an elected bencher. But you, I personally feel more that my role is as an advisor now, rather than an active participant. But I certainly, if there is something I feel very strongly about, I do certainly speak.

AF Yes. And you've consistently attended [Convocation] since you were Treasurer?

LL Not, I fell off for a few years, but I've been going back more regularly recently. Yes.

AF Great. While you were Treasurer you met a number of notable people and I was wondering if you could name some of those people. I believe Margaret Thatcher, you had a photo, was that while you were Treasurer?

LL That was when I was resurrected in 1988 for 2 months. When Dan Chilcock was appointed to the Bench, and Jack Brown was Treasurer, Chairman of Finance and should have assumed the role, and he called me and said, "I don't want to be the shortest-lived Treasurer in history" and he said, "Would I go back for two months", and I did, and that was an interesting experience. Would you like to hear it? [Note: Mr. Brown was Chair of Finance].

AF Yes, absolutely.

LL I was sitting in my office when, I said I would only do it if there was nothing difficult coming up and I was assured no, it was just a holding pattern for 2 months. Because I was very busy, and I didn't have time. And I was sitting in my office and Kenneth Jarvis telephoned me to say that he had heard from the British High Commissioner, and that Mrs. Thatcher would be very pleased to become an Honorary bencher. And I said, "I don't recall that having been presented to Convocation, because

that sort of thing would have to be approved by Convocation”. And, he said, “No, it wasn’t. The Treasurer had on his own initiative sent an invitation, and then had gone off to the bench”. And I said “Oh dear”. It was when there was a great deal of political problems about apartheid in South Africa. And, as you may recall, Mrs. Thatcher was refused to boycott South Africa. And I said “Telephone. You and Richard Tinsley telephone every bencher and I’ll be home this evening and call me. If there’s a problem, I will call a Special Convocation.” Because I didn’t want to do what had happened at Oxford where it became world news that Oxford refused to have her speak, or give her an honorary degree, and it was very insulting. So, at about 9 o’clock that evening he telephoned to say that they had telephoned, I think, fifty-one benchers and forty-seven approved, and four dissented. I said, “Well, I think that that’s enough of a majority. Tomorrow we’ll get a letter off to the High Commissioner and make arrangements and have Mrs. Thatcher become an honorary bencher.” It was an interesting thing. I had two benchers, no, one bencher, call me and say I couldn’t do it. Well, don’t tell me I can’t do it! Convocation had spoken, which I said, “I wasn’t doing it, Convocation was doing it!” So the invitation went. But the next morning the CBC telephoned me and said they had Mr. Morris Manning speaking as a constitutional expert and would I speak? Well, I was so annoyed I said, “Yes, I would.” And poor Morris Manning: I was so angry, he couldn’t get a word in edgewise! And I said we were not going to be another Oxford, and insult a visiting Prime Minister because of a very few vocal minority who objected, when the overwhelming majority were delighted. In any event, this was very interesting. She came, and was delightful, and Mr. Roland Michener, former Governor General spoke, and we had a lovely ceremony in the library at Osgoode Hall, and she was

delightful. She spoke to every bencher there, and that evening we had a dinner – she couldn't stay for the dinner, of course – but the British, I don't know whether it was the High Commissioner or the Consular General here, was at dinner with us and he thanked me (they knew what was going on) for not embarrassing their prime minister. And I said, “Well, that isn't the function of this Law Society.” I was, you know... Oh, and I must tell you and I think you should know this that absolutely shocked me. I received thirteen letters, and they are somewhere on file at the Law Society, from women, complaining because I was allowing her, *I* was allowing her – you know, once again, it wasn't I, it was Convocation -- to become an Honorary bencher, when she was all the horrible things that the militant feminists felt she was. I don't know what she was. And I, I was so naïve. I had no idea that they actually didn't like women who had made it on their own initiative, and she of course had made it without reference to anybody except her own ability. I suppose she had behaved like a man and got there without playing the gender card. And one of the letters actually threatened me that they would fix me. I was a little concerned about it. The, I forget who the woman lawyer was, but she worked for the—

AF These were lawyers sending these letters?!

LL These were lawyers. And she threatened me. And she said “We will fix you”. And she worked for the Attorney General, and I debated whether or not I should send the letter to the Attorney General but the consensus of the, my advisors at the Law Society at the time was, forget it: a lunatic fringe.

INTERRUPTION. RECORDING RESUMES.

LL I was, I was very hurt about that. I thought it was no way for women to behave. And I only remember one of the women who had written to me. I have a

wonderful mind: I am quite capable of putting out of mind things that, out of my mind, things that are unpleasant, and I put that out of my mind. And it was the first time that I had ever been cognizant of the fact that there was a group of women who profess to be concerned about women, who really weren't. And I was shocked to find out—

AF What do you think they were--

LL I guess they were just miserable, unhappy women who, whatever their agenda was... I, I couldn't imagine why they hated Margaret Thatcher. You know, she was the Prime Minister of England, not of Canada. She'd made it on her own steam, no matter what you may have thought of her. But, anyway, that was my experience with Margaret Thatcher.

AF Were there any other notable people you met when you were Treasurer?

LL Well, when I was Treasurer the Honorable Roland Michener, who was a former Governor General, and, of course, he was an Honorary bencher, had been made an Honorary bencher, and he used to come to every Convocation. He was a delightful person, and I'm very fond of him. You know he made a great Governor General, and he was a real gentleman. And he was a very nice man. The other person who used to come to every Convocation was the former Attorney General, Arthur Wishart, who made a great contribution and, of course, the Honorable Allan Lawrence comes to every Convocation now, and is excellent. And those people come really in the public interest, and they have a contribution to make. We're fortunate to have them.

AF We were just talking about Margaret Thatcher and we were talking about this a bit earlier, your role as first woman Treasurer. I wanted to ask you – and perhaps I

should have asked this earlier – if you feel that it made it easier for women to follow you subsequently as a bencher, as a Treasurer?

LL Probably. I guess it made the men realize that just because you were female, you weren't a monster, and you weren't going to make a lot of waves. I never thought of myself, as I have said before, as a woman lawyer. I always thought of myself as a lawyer. And when I became a bencher I thought of myself as a bencher, and I was there to do a job as a bencher. And I think that my male colleagues realized that I wasn't there with any hidden agenda, but to do my part, you know, they were, it was acceptable. But I think that women, as we have become, and are becoming the majority in the profession, there will be no problem in women being, well there hasn't been with a woman being elected. They're going to have to be elected on their own merit, just as men have always been.

AF I also wanted to ask you about the portrait that resides in Convocation of you: could you tell me about having it done?

LL Well, what happened Barry Pepper and, I think, Stuart Thom, both felt that as I was the first woman elected as a bencher I think they never thought, it never crossed their mind, that I might become Treasurer, that they should have a portrait of the first woman bencher.

AF Oh, I thought it was for Treasurer!

LL No. [laughs] So they had, and I was terribly embarrassed and they insisted, and I kept putting it off, so I finally, I was only a bencher when that was painted, but they did it because I was the first woman bencher and then, of course, when I became

Treasurer and I already had my [laughs] portrait done. And then Ken Jarvis wanted to do my head -- of course, he's a sculptor -- so that's how that happened.

AF So that's for Treasurer?

LL Yes. Double.

AF Who painted the portrait?

LL Cleeve Horne.

AF Did you know him before?

LL No. But he had done several of the former Treasurers.

AF Right.

LL Stuart Thom, Brendan O'Brien. I don't know. I don't know: who else? I think he did George Finlayson.

AF And were you pleased with the result?

LL Well, one, you can't judge your own portrait. It means nothing to you. You're almost embarrassed to look at it, you know. Our daughter is an artist, and an art historian, and is not pleased. But then your own family never is because what they see in you, is not what anyone else would see in you.

AF Yes. It's true. What about the head that was done?

LL Well, my husband likes it. I never thought of asking my children. I don't think it matters.

AF That's just outside Convocation? Right near the benchers' entrance?

LL It's on the landing. The top of the first flight of the bencher's stairs.

AF Has it always been there?

LL It was there, at one stage it was moved, and I don't know why, and it was put back. Bob Armstrong put it back.

AF So every Treasurer would have a painting done of them, usually?

LL Yes.

AF And I understand they rotate them?

LL Pardon?

AF Rotate them in Convocation, once the new Treasurer came in?

LL Yes. Well, the rule always was that once a Treasurer has died they remove the portrait from Convocation. If he is sitting in Convocation, then his portrait is in Convocation.

AF OK. Right.

LL So George Finlayson, who comes to Convocation, his portrait would go back in as is Sydney Robins. Eventually they will have to remove John Robinette's portrait because he has now been dead for many years. However...

AF Are there many traditions along that line?

LL Well, I can't think of them. The one wonderful tradition really is that nobody really speaks in the dining room except the Treasurer, or anybody who's invited to speak. It's a lovely tradition.

[laughter]

AF Now, I wanted to ask you about awards or honours you have received for your service to the Law Society and the legal community. Could you tell me something about those?

LL I can't think. Well, yes, the Law Society gave me an honorary LL.D. And—

AF What year would that have been?

LL Nineteen eighty-- I'm not certain. I think it was '87 or '88.

AF Right. So after you had been Treasurer?

LL Oh, yes.

AF What did that involve? Was it a ceremony at the Law Society?

LL No, no. It was at a Call to the Bar Ceremony.

AF Right. I noticed that outside your office door you have an Order of Ontario.

LL Yes, that was just awarded this year.

AF And what was that in recognition of?

LL Well, [pause] I guess, just various things that I've done. I've served on the Ontario Election Expenses Commission as a bencher, I served on, I was a director, well this had nothing to do with bencher, but I served on the Home Care Programme of Metropolitan Toronto for a number of years, and I was on, and that coincided with my being a nurse. What else did I do? I was director of the Toronto Economic Development Corporation for a number of years, and I was also the chairman of that, and I was Commissioner of the Parking Commission of Toronto, and chairman of that, what else was I on? I was very active in the Soroptimist Club of Toronto.

AF I'm sorry, what was that club?

LL It was a woman's service club, and it used to be a very active club that raised money for charities for causes, mostly for women, where there was hiatus and there was nobody to help them. In the early days, we used to raise money for cancer patients. Well that's sort of dying now. Like all service clubs there isn't a call for them. And then, we did, what else have I done? I can't remember. I was the director of the Canada Life

Assurance Company for fourteen years, but that had nothing to do with helping service...
But it was that sort of thing.

AF Right. Can you think of any other awards or honours that you received from the Law Society?

LL No.

AF They don't generally award many things, is that right?

LL No.

AF When you received the LL.D what did the recognition of your service to the legal community mean to you to receive that?

LL Well, I was very pleased. There's nothing so pleasant as being honoured by your peers, because they know. There was a citation read by Allan Rock. I should find it for you. It's around here somewhere. I don't know where it is. I will look for it.

AF Now, I wanted to move on to ask you about some of the committee work that you had served on while a bencher and Treasurer. I know that you have a particular interest in the role of small law firms and sole practitioners in Ontario, and I wondered if you could tell me about some of the work done by these committees, and why it's important.

LL Well, I can tell you why that committee is very important. It is essential for the access to justice and to the average citizen that the small law firms remain, because for probably ninety-five percent of the people of Ontario their lawyer is in a firm of five or fewer. A lawyer who wants, or a citizen who wants to make a will, or buy a house, isn't going to go to a giant law firm. They're going to find a small neighbourhood lawyer. And those lawyers are really essential for the access to justice, and this is why I

feel very strongly that we must do anything we can to preserve their viability. And it's becoming more and more difficult with-- This is another place where too many lawyers are cutting back on the income, because if you have three lawyers where you should have one, there's going to be a third of the income. And that is a bit of a problem, I think. I think numbers are hurting the small law firms. I may be wrong, I don't know, but I hope I'm wrong and I don't think I am. And I think this essentially hurts the public, because if a lawyer can't afford to keep his office open, then where is the public going to go to? And, you know, I find now in my stage of life I have people coming in saying "For goodness' sake, keep on practicing." Life does have an end, and my days are certainly numbered, but fortunately we have junior lawyers here who will carry on. But there are a lot of law firms that, they just disappear, and it's too bad. So that is my interest in small law firms. Because it's essential that the service, for legal services to the public, that we have the small law firms.

AF Do you feel that working yourself in a small law firm that that assisted other practitioners who work in small firms, or sole practitioners, to think about becoming a bencher or Treasurer?

LL I don't think so. It is, it is a great financial sacrifice to be a bencher. And a very few small law firms, small firm lawyers, can afford the time. I was very fortunate: my husband is a lawyer and, I was, you know, I didn't even think of becoming a bencher until I had been a lawyer for twenty-eight years. And these young lawyers who think they can become benchers when they've been lawyers for five or ten years, which some of them have, they have no idea what they're getting into. And they shouldn't be running, for two reasons: they haven't had the life experience, they haven't had the

experience in the profession, and they can't afford it! So, I-- And in the days gone by, nobody tried to become bencher until they were older, so that they could afford to give the time, and that's a very big factor. Because it's a big financial sacrifice.

AF Now something I had meant to ask you earlier when I was asking you about becoming Treasurer: your year was the first year that any payment was made for Treasurer?

LL That's correct.

AF But, I'm trying to think of the amount—

LL It was fifty thousand dollars.

AF Right. And, in 1983, would that have been considered a great deal of money?

LL Well, I want to tell you: both years that I was Treasurer my income, as a practitioner, went down a hundred thousand dollars a year, so [laughs] the fifty thousand didn't compensate for what I lost. [laughs]

AF No, no. We talked earlier about your work on the legal education committee. I wanted to also ask you also about the Muniments and Memorabilia Committee: you were involved in that?

LL Oh, yes. Oh, that is-- The person who deserves so much credit about that committee is, and it was always sort of a joke. You know you were appointed to that committee and everybody would sort of go, "ha ha". And Reginae Tait who was a lay bencher who was just a superb lay bencher – some of the lay benchers have just been outstanding: they've made such a contribution, and they're like a breath of fresh air, and she was one – she got in there and, of course, she's interested in history (she was a former teacher), she started looking, and what she uncovered was remarkable. And she came

and said, “Do you realize what you have in this Society”? And some of the treasures that she literally uncovered that were moulding away in the basement. And she was the one who was instrumental in having a curator appointed to start documenting our assets, and cataloguing what we had—

AF So when would this have been: the ‘80s again?

LL This would have been, was in-- Well ’83, it was in the 1980s.

AF So you were Treasurer?

LL Yes, when I was Treasurer. Of course, I encouraged her because history was my hobby. And she also was the one, when we had decided to have stained glass windows in Convocation Hall, she personally raised the money to have those windows installed. She went to the law firms and she went, and persuaded people to give. Every one of those windows has been dedicated by somebody and she was the one who arranged it, and her contribution was just incredible.

AF Were you involved with the stained glass windows at all?

LL Yes, I was there when we had to choose the, I met, you know, the various people we were looking at. And we were the ones that brought in the designs that we looked at, and chose the designs. We had one design that came in, it was all sort of modern like a modern painting, and we said, “That’s all well and good, but that’s not the Law Society,” and the windows that we have are all very traditional and historical. And--

AF Did you, as a committee, set the themes that you felt it was important to cover, or was that up to the artist: how did that work?

LL Well, um, the artist brought them, and the committee approved them.

AF You were on the committee at that time?

LL I was Treasurer, so I was on every committee. So I was involved in it, yes.

AF Can you think of some of the more important or interesting records, historical records, that were uncovered at that time?

LL Well, you know that after I have been Treasurer, Convocation Room was, had been painted turquoise, everything, including the wood, and it had satin swag drapes that were just filthy and window curtains, you couldn't see out. And I had been trying to get someone, and when I was Treasurer Barry Pepper is very careful (he was chairman of finance) about spending money, and when I stopped being Treasurer I went to Arthur Scace who was the acting Treasurer and said, "Arthur we have to do something about this room, it's a disgrace". So he appointed Jim Carthy and me, as a committee of two, to renovate Convocation Room. And the architect was, I'm thinking McMurray, I don't think it was, and he said, "You know, we'll get the wood cleaned." And I think that room is beautiful now. And there was one window facing south, and where the other window should have been there was a bookcase, that was locked. And I said, "Let's get that bookcase out, and let's get the window back in." Well, they tore out the bookcase to discover that behind the bookcase there was a brick wall, there wasn't a window. [laughs] In any event, the architect was very embarrassed. But when he opened the bookcase, which hadn't been opened for who knows how many years, they discovered in it two books. One was a handwritten diary of Lady Simcoe whose husband John Grave Simcoe was one of the first governors of Upper Canada, back in the beginning of the nineteenth century. And this was a handwritten diary. The other thing they found was a book inscribed "To Osgoode Hall Toronto, in memory of my dear late husband, Albert, signed Victoria R". And we have that book. And then there was, you know, various

things that they found in the basement: old silver that had been it was just, it was blackened. Marvellous things.

AF So that was all pulled and there's an archivist in place and –

LL That's right.

AF And a library and—

LL Right. And there were a lot of papers that have now been preserved. But the person who was certainly the instigator of that and behind it, and deserves ninety-nine percent of the credit was a lay bencher, Reginae Tait.

AF Right. Now we've talked along the way today about different individuals who have served with you at the Law Society. We talked about Ken Jarvis and a number of benchers and former Treasurers. I was wondering if there was anybody that we had missed talking about that you would like to—

LL Well, the ones who were very dedicated and made great contributions: there was Barry Pepper, and it was always a pity that he was never Treasurer. He would liked to have been, but he was never elected. He would have been a superb Treasurer. And he made a great contribution to the Law Society. Stuart Thom was elected Treasurer, and he was a great supporter. He was a great supporter of women in the profession, and, as you know, he was an outstanding tax lawyer in his day. And he was always a great supporter of me, an encourager. Brendan O'Brien, I have mentioned, and you will be interviewing him. It's a great pity you couldn't have interviewed Stuart Thom, because he was a wonderful character. George Finlayson: you will interview him?

AF The other interviewer will interview him.

LL Yes. But George is a great friend, a great fellow. Of course, George is younger than I and I've known since we were very young. You know, there have been some outstanding people here who have given hundreds and thousands of hours to the Law Society. And it's quite remarkable what they have done.

AF There are two other names I have here: Gordon Farquharson and John Arnup.

LL Yes. John Arnup has, of course, he was not there, he had already gone to the bench when I became a bencher, and he was an outstanding counsel in his day. And he has been back since he left the bench and, once again, his contribution is, you know, he's a very wise man. And these are very experienced people.

INTERRUPTION. RECORDING RESUMES.

LL Yes. John Arnup was a leading counsel, a brilliant courtroom lawyer, once again, but most of the time that I have been a bencher he was on the bench. But he has come back since he retired, and whenever he speaks he has something wise to say. He's a nice man.

AF Yes. And Gordon Farquharson?

LL Gordon was a very faithful bencher, even as a life bencher. He was there all the time. And, you know, when one considers that he had to come eighty miles for every Convocation, and every committee day, and he'd seldom miss it. When you consider what they gave. And, you know, this is all pro bono work, you're not paid for it. It's remarkable. He was very sensible and, of course, he knew about the small law firms, and he knew about rural Ontario, and what was needed for the public's interest for small town and small city Ontario. So, the contribution of people like Gordon Farquharson is incredibly important to the Law Society. You know, I think of people that we have from

London, we had Jim Wardlaw from Orangeville and you know, well, Sam Lerner from London, who was a wonderful person, a great benchner, you know, from small cities and small towns because it's quite different from seeing the profession and the public if you're in Toronto, and they understood, and they brought a perspective that was very important. And the thing, the sacrifice that the out-of-town benchers made was just incredible. Much more than the Toronto ones make.

AF Well— Sorry, have I cut you off? Was there anyone else?

LL No. No.

AF Finally, I would like to ask you about the changing role of the Law Society over the time that you have been involved as a benchner and Treasurer: in fact, over your professional career. And I wanted to ask how you would characterize the changes. Obviously it's bigger (it has more administrative functions), and some of the functions are different and some are the same, such as discipline and education.

LL We, the one area where there's been a great change in disciplining is in sexual harassment. This was something that one never heard of thirty years ago. And I suppose it was bound to come with the increase in the number of women in the profession. There has been many more discipline hearings involving sexual harassment or sexual interference that one would not have thought of thirty years ago. It just didn't exist. It might have existed, but it just was never brought to our attention. The other change that I see, I think that when I first became a benchner we were much, Convocation was much more involved in the functioning of the Law Society, it was much more, I suppose, "hands on". A lot of the functions that were carried out by Convocation have been delegated to the administration. I think that that, I suppose, had to come when we

had not 7,500 lawyers but 30,000 and I think that sheer numbers has necessitated that. I don't think it's an improvement, because I think there were a lot of very wise decisions made then. I think that there's a lot more, when you go into Convocation now there's a lot more talk about policy and, rather than in our day in the, you know, years ago, and you went in, and you talked about the very basics of, you know, practicing law and what should be done. I think, it's my view, that it was better the way it was, than the way it is now. However, that's my age, probably. I think that the public was better served when the benchers were able to keep a very close eye on the practice of law.

AF But as you say the numbers are so much greater.

LL Well, that's true. But the one area where we have certainly lost out is in unauthorized practice. And we always used to, if people were practicing law without a license, calling themselves paralegals, or whatever, the Law Society was in to prevent it. And this is very much in the public interest. Because if you're not a lawyer, you shouldn't be practicing law. And what happened a few years ago, someone decided that why should the Law Society be spending money prosecuting people for practicing law without a license, it was up to the government, so they stopped doing it. And paralegals, of course, the government did nothing, and it's now almost become a sub-profession and doing terrible work. And it's not serving the public, and it's no financial saving because they charge as much as a lawyer, or more, in many cases for terrible work. And they draw wills that are an abomination, in most cases, well, because they don't know the law behind it. And you can't draw a will unless you have a basic understanding of family law, tax law, and all kinds of law. And, you know, any of my clerks who are in my estate department can draw a will, but they wouldn't know the law behind it. So, unfortunately,

the unauthorized practice of law has really gotten out of control. And we had that silly report of Mr. Justice Cory a few years ago and [I don't know] whether you read it or not. But I did, and it could only be written or made by someone who had never been involved with a small law firm practicing law, and dealing with the public.

The real danger of that was that the Attorney General, or a couple of them, have been on the point of enacting this recommendation into law. Well, it's not going to hurt me because I have no clients who I would care about who would go to a paralegal, but mostly for the new Canadians who don't know the difference they are going to be very badly hurt.

AF Yes. Now, I've pretty much come to the end of my questions for today, but I wondered if there was anything that you would like to raise about your experience as bencher and Treasurer for the Law Society?

LL Yes, well, I must say it's been a very fulfilling experience. It's the sort of thing that at the end of the two years that I was Treasurer I was absolutely physically exhausted. It was the hardest two years of my life. It's the sort of thing you're glad you did it, and you're glad when it's over! [laughs] But it's very satisfying to be a bencher, and to have been Treasurer, and to think that you *may* have made some small contribution for the public interest. One hopes you have. And, I would do it again! [laughs] But it's, it is a great sacrifice in time and effort, but it's worth it. It's very satisfying.

AF Thank you very much.

LL OK. Shall we go for lunch?

END OF INTERVIEW

LAURA LEGGE INTERVIEW #4

DATE: JULY 29, 2004

**PLACE: LEGGE AND LEGGE, BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS
65 ST. CLAIR AVE. E., TORONTO**

INTERVIEWER: ALISON FORREST

**MEDIA: 2 MINI-DISKS APPROX. 56:23 AND 25:49 MINUTES IN LENGTH,
AND ONE VIDEO RECORDING OF SAME. Tracks 2-5 of second mini-disk
record description of 6 photos to be donated to Law Society, approx. 3:13 minutes in
length.**

AF This is Alison Forrest speaking. Today is July the twenty-ninth, 2004.

Interviewing Mrs. Laura Legge, interview number four, for the Law Society of Upper
Canada's Treasurers' Project.

....

AF Now, today we are going to talk about your extensive committee and
volunteer work. And before we discuss particular organizations, I just wanted to ask you
some general questions. We had talked before about the number of organizations you
had worked for. Perhaps if I name them up front, we can talk about them subsequently.
So, today I'd like to ask you about four sub-groups that you've work for over the years.
The first has to do with organizations that promote women's interests, the second has to
do with organizations in the health area that draw on your previous work as a nurse, the
third has to do with business interests and your interests as a businesswoman, and the
fourth one has to do with a couple of organizations that look to be related to your
children's interests: the Ontario College of the Arts, and Trinity College, University of
Toronto.

So, the committees we were going to talk about today, not in this order, will also
include two organizations that are legal organizations that we have touched upon earlier

in our conversations: the Women's Law Association of Ontario and the Federation of Law Societies. The other organizations I wanted to talk to you about today are:

- Soroptimist Club of Toronto
- Metropolitan Toronto Home Care Programme
- Ontario College of the Arts
- Toronto Board of Trade
- Canada Life Assurance Company
- Ontario Safety League
- Women's College Hospital
- Trinity College Parent's Committee
- Toronto Parking Authority
- Toronto Economic Development Organization

So, that's quite an extensive list. I was wondering, in addition to the organizations I've just listed, if you were a member of organizations other than participating in board work, for example, or committee work. If you had membership in other organizations?

LL I can't think of any.

AF OK.

LL Other than the Royal Commonwealth Society and the Empire Club of Canada which are speaking clubs. And, of course, our church.

AF When would you have been involved in those organizations, in what years approximately?

LL Well, the Empire Club of Canada from the time that they allowed women members, and I don't know when that would have been: sometime in the 1970s? And the Royal Commonwealth Society: I've been a member since 1975.

AF And what about church--?

LL All my life. [laughs]

AF All your life. Now, the last time we were talking you were describing your work as a bencher and Treasurer for the Law Society, and in addition to those roles you've also been involved in all these other organizations. Now, the question I would want to ask first is, what moved you to be involved in all these other organizations, when you already had such heavy work and family and Law Society commitments?

LL I can't imagine! [laughs] Perhaps I had difficulty saying no. No, that's not so. I was interested, and I always felt that if I could make a contribution for the general good I should. It was as simple as that, and whenever people asked me to do something, they would always say it would only take an hour a month.

AF Right.

LL And then those are the famous last words. The hour a month would end up being two or three days a month. In any event, I was involved in many other organizations, but not all of them at the same time so-- They were *in seriatum*, so that helped.

AF Now, we talked earlier about your parents' example of public service, and the kind of example they set for you. And your father, for example, was a reeve during the Great Depression.

LL Oh yes, yes.

AF And you've also talked about the importance of the public service element in the legal profession, so this is evidently a theme that is important to your life.

LL It is.

AF Now, you've just said that people have asked you to participate in these different committees, but the sheer amount of work – I guess you've answered that question in some ways – it seemed less [it should read "more"] than you had expected.

LL Well, perhaps that was partly my own fault. Because I never joined anything unless I was prepared to do whatever was required. I never joined anything just to have my name on it, I joined to contribute. And I hope I did. I certainly tried to.

AF Now, last week, as well, when we were talking about your work for the Law Society as a bencher and Treasurer, you described yourself as a personality who only spoke if you felt that you had something to add to a discussion, and yet the roles that you have assumed in the different committees is very much a leadership role.

LL Yes.

AF So, I was wondering what it is about you that allows you to take these leadership roles?

LL I don't know.

[laughter]

LL I suppose it was something I was born with. I can remember as a child when we used to go out in the playground to play I was always the one who was the leader.

AF Oh right. Well, there has to be someone who does that. What would you say along the same lines, that made you an effective leader? What kind of qualities do you think--?

LL I don't know. No, I think that a leader has to be prepared to listen to people. You also have to have, in my opinion, a decisive personality, you can't, and I've said this many times, you can't be a person with no opinions and, you know, everything is grey. You have to stand for something to be a leader, and I think that's important. You know, if you are a person with no personality of your own, no character of your own, then you're not going to be a leader. You have to stand for something, you have to believe in something, and you have to be committed to something. And I think that's very important. No matter what your commitments are, or what you stand for, you can't portray, you know, portray to other people your standpoint and your commitments, if you stand for nothing yourself.

AF Right. Now I'd like to ask you – I guess I've asked you in different ways earlier – but how you managed to organize your schedule, so that everything got done? Did you allot time for a particular thing at a particular time, and organize your day that way, perhaps?

LL No, I never gave it any thought. I just didn't waste any time.

AF Right. [laughs]

LL I move quickly and I think quickly and I just don't waste any time. I just get it done.

AF Right. Now some of the committee work that you were involved in, would have occurred when your children were still at school, so younger children.

LL I was involved a bit when they were still in school, but most of my outside involvement was after they were away, they were in university, or they were grown up. For example, by 1975 they were all in university and they were mature and that's when I

was elected a bencher at the Law Society. And before that my principal involvement outside the house was with the Soroptimist Club, and my husband and I always arranged it so that if I were out in the evening he was usually home. But, mind you, we always had a housekeeper living in the house, and she was a very responsible woman living with us for years, and the children were never left at home alone, at any age.

AF So, a question I didn't ask you earlier was what year your husband joined the law practice?

LL He joined it, on a full time basis, in 1973.

AF Oh, that late? Right. And you started the practice in 1955, 56?

LL Yes, I started the law practice on my own in those years.

AF So, in terms of the timing of committee work, even with the Soroptimist International, you would have had the business up and going?

LL Yes, I joined the Soroptimist Club, I believe, in 1959. Yes.

AF So, you would have had the business fairly established to allow you to—

LL Yes, that's right.

AF --do other things?

LL Yes, well, a law practice is always growing and changing.

AF Yes, yes. I'd like to turn now to talk about particular committees. And I'd like to talk now first, as I said, about the women's organizations that you were involved in. Now, I think you told me that you were involved in the Women's Law Association since 1945, when you were a law student?

LL Correct. Yes.

AF So, all women were members of--?

LL We automatically became members of the Women's Law Association.

AF And at that time you said that the Toronto Lawyer's Club didn't accept women, is that right?

LL No one accepted women, except the Women's Law Association. [laughs]

AF Right. And you were describing also this particular group – the Women's Law Association – had very few women in it, and you knew one another quite well?

LL Well, there were very few of us practicing and there were very few who had been called to the Bar. If you look at the rolls, you will see how few of them there were. You know, a half dozen, anywhere from three to a half dozen in a year. In my year, there were eight women called to the Bar, so we weren't very many. And it was the normal practice, in those years, that if you married you stayed home, you didn't work. So there weren't many practicing lawyers. But the Women's Law Association was supported by women, even women who married and weren't practicing; they supported the Women's Law Association. And came to our meetings. So this was how we *knew* the second, third, fourth, the earliest women who had been called to the Bar.

AF Right. Was that an important way to get to know other women in the profession?

LL Oh yes, indeed. And we, I guess, the modern jargon is networking, but we all became friends. And those of us who are still left are friends, and we helped each other professionally. It was a marvellous organization.

AF Was it set up for that purpose in part?

LL It was set up, I believe, during the First World War by a small group of women, and I think it was, it was their professional organization. And there were a very

few women, of course, at that time, but most of those women were still members when I became a member.

AF Oh right! So, can you think of anyone in particular?

LL Yes, there was, there was Grace Newton no, not Grace Newton, Elizabeth Newton, who was a lawyer. She was one of the early ones. She became the librarian of the York County Library. There was Laura Duff. Now she married, and didn't practice, but she was still very much involved. And there was, who else [pause], I'm sorry, I'm having difficulty remembering their names. There was another woman who did estate law, and was still practicing. There was Marion Lamey, who was one of the early ones, and she practiced, and did real estate law, and did all sorts of agency work for lawyers. Until the 1970s she was still working. The other early lawyers: there was Apha Hodgins, who practiced law in Bowmanville, and she was one of the early ones, and she was still practicing. There was Mrs. Wright whose son, Peter Wright, became a judge of the Supreme Court, and Mrs. Wright – Mrs. Ward Wright -- was the second woman called to the Bar in Ontario. And she was very active. There was Vera Parsons, wasn't that active in the Women Lawyers' Association, but she was a very well know criminal defense lawyer. There was Margaret Hyndman; she was not in the Women's Law Association. She didn't believe in women having a separate organization. She believed we should fight to belong to the men's association. And, but, in any event, she and I became great friends. And she was a marvellous lawyer. She did corporate, she did everything, she did court work. And it's a pity that all of you young lawyers couldn't have known her. She was an inspiration. She was clever. Well-known everywhere. Very much involved in the business and professional women internationally when it was a new organization.

So those were some of the women. There were many more. If I saw the list I could tell you. Yes, oh yes, there was Helen Kinnear, who became the first woman judge appointed in the whole British Commonwealth. And she was a judge in the County of Haldimond, and she sat in Cayuga, and she came to all or most of our women's association events. She was at every Christmas dinner, for example, she was-- You know, these people were an inspiration to the younger ones. She was great. You know, she was appointed in the 1930s.

AF Yes, very early, yes.

LL And, you know, that-- Which proved that women, even in these years, when women weren't generally accepted and did it. Margaret Hyndman was appointed a KC, I think, in 1937, very early on, so women did very well, and by 1945 there was a number of women QCs. No, they were still KCs.

AF So these women were an inspiration to you, personally?

LL They were, indeed. They were an example, and the attitude always was: "You're a lawyer, get on with it and do it. We did it." And they did it against, certainly against odds that we didn't have to encounter.

AF And yet you were a groundbreaker yourself in later years.

LL Well, I suppose, in some ways. But it wasn't that, wasn't nearly as difficult for my generation. You know, these older women had shown men that women could be effective lawyers.

AF And you didn't feel that you needed to prove that?

LL No, I, all I felt that we needed to do was if you wanted to be a lawyer, be a lawyer.

AF And yet your generation to my generation have proved to be groundbreakers: you've been the first of many things.

LL Yes, perhaps. Mabel Van Camp, of course, who was at law school with me, was the first woman appointed to the Supreme Court. And I suppose a lot of our generation were firsts. That's right.

AF Now you've talked about Margaret Hyndman quite a bit. Was she someone who particularly helped you. She was a friend?

LL She was a friend and I had a great respect for her. We had a great many long conversations during her lifetime as she got old, and a bit lonely and all of her friends were dying, and we became friends and was a-- I think the Osgoode Society did tape, they do have a tape of her. Because I kept telling her that she had to do it and I think she did do it, because, you know, it would be fascinating to hear what she had to say. She told me many fascinating tales.

AF Now you were saying that she took the stand that women shouldn't have this separate organization? You raised your eyebrows at that. What do you think of that?

LL Well, I don't, I think-- At the time there was no organization that would have us [laughs] so it was nice to have a legal group that we could belong to, that helped each other, and we were a support to each other, and we did help each other and we were important. And you know we weren't, the Jewish lawyers weren't allowed to join the Lawyers' Club, and the Catholic lawyers weren't allowed to join the Lawyers' Club. It was incredible! This is why we had the Thomas More Society, and why we had the Reading Club. I don't know whether they still exist, or not. But we weren't unique. You

know, we were singled out, as were the Jewish lawyers, as were the Catholic lawyers. It seems incredible in this day and age, but it happened.

AF Yes, a different time, perhaps?

LL Thank goodness.

[laughter]

AF And are you still a member of the Women's Law Association?

LL Yes, I am. But I'm not active now. You know, it was very useful in my day but, you know, like all things, life moves on, and I'm not...

AF Certainly, as we've said, it's a very different time now. And yet many young women lawyers join the Association now, so they see a need still for an organization like this.

LL Yes, well, perhaps they do. And certainly if they can join and have support and help, then I say great. And certainly I personally have always gone out of my way to help young women lawyers. And I have been a mentor over the years to innumerable women lawyers who have wanted to start their own practice, and I am doing it for one woman lawyer right now! And she calls me once or twice a week, and she comes in, and I give her precedents, I monitor her work, and I think that this is extremely important for older lawyers to help younger lawyers. And I have found it, over the years, very important to help young women, and I always have. And my idea of helping women in the practice of law is helping on a one-to-one basis. You know, I had one lawyer say to me one time who was a very active, I hate to use the word, feminist, she couldn't help people on a one-to-one basis, you know: you help them. Don't go and organize protests, you get down in the field, and give them a hand. And there are a good many lawyers,

you know, I've forgotten who I've mentored over the years, and after two or three years of giving them precedents helping them, and showing them how to do things, they're launched!

AF That's great. Now, when you were president of the Women's Law Association – that was 1964 to 1966?

LL Yes, it was.

AF Were you able to be a member of the Toronto Lawyers' Club at that time?

LL No.

AF No, still not? OK. What were the numbers like for the organization? Were there more women coming in?

LL I think-- We used to send out notices every month (we met every month, except in the summer months), and we used to send notices to every woman on the rolls and, as I recall, we would send out about two hundred notices a month. And this was for every woman who was still a solicitor on the rolls-- And more than that, I guess, anybody we knew about, who had been called to the Bar so the numbers were--

AF Low? Yes.

LL And, I think, by 1975, as I recall, when I was running to be a bencher for the Law Society, there were four hundred women who had been called to the Bar. Now, it was somewhere in that neighborhood.

AF Yes, still very low, yes. Now during your years as president, were there any particular initiatives that you were involved in?

LL Yes, well there was one terribly, well it might have been in that period. They were building the new courthouse on University Avenue: have I told you this?

AF No.

LL Yes, anyhow. Somehow, the Women's Law Association asked if we could see the plans for the women, for the women's robing room. And in the old City Hall, which had been the, sort of, it had been the courthouse, the women's robing room consisted of a curtain which had been put up at the end of a hall. It was just disgraceful. Well, nobody ever bothered. Well, there were so few of us. I used to gown if I had to go to court, I used to gown and put my coat over, and used to just put my outside gown on there. But we asked to see the plans for the women's robing room: there wasn't one! So Noreen Stevens and I arranged to see the head of the property department of the city of Toronto, a man by the name of Wellwood, whom I got to know subsequently when he married a friend of mine, and we went to him and we said "This is appalling! There has to be a room for women barristers to robe." So they gave us a little room with eight lockers in it. And I can remember about maybe ten years later, maybe 15 years later, and they still had the same little room, and the women's clothes were piled everywhere. And then, eventually, of course, and I don't know who was behind it, but they now have a proper robing room for women lawyers. But, had the Women's Law Association not intervened, they would have completed the courthouse on University Avenue with no robing room for women lawyers! [laughs] Which was appalling! But, anyway, Noreen Stevens and I, on behalf of the Women's Law Association, at least got a small robing room. But, I recall, in 1963, going out to Milton, and they had a new courthouse in Milton. And we were there doing undefended divorces, there were, and they had nine cases, eight of them represented by women lawyers, which was quite remarkable, including Mabel Van Camp and myself, and I forget who else was there, oh, and Laura

Greave from London was there. And there was no robing room for women lawyers. They had built a new courtroom in Milton, in about 1960, with no robing room for women lawyers. And we had to robe in a tiny little toilet, and hang our clothes outside, in the hall.

AF How awful!

LL Yes. [laughs]

AF And, of course, one is not supposed to wear your robes in public so you had to change there?

LL Yes, that's right. Well, that's the one thing. Of course, we weren't involved in Milton when they were building that courthouse. Now, fortunately, there are enough women that they certainly can't get away with that kind of nonsense.

AF No, no. Was there anything else that you can remember the organization doing that was important?

LL No-- It was a very pleasant group and when we had meetings we enjoyed it very much. About, sometime in the benchers' election, we worked very hard to have Margaret Hyndman elected a bencher, and there were fifteen benchers elected from Toronto and she was number sixteen, and – I think I've told you this story? – but she should have been a bencher and, instead of her moving in when someone was appointed to the bench, they skipped her and appointed, some male. And, you know, which was a mark of the incredible person she was: she never complained about it. But she quietly, and I'm sure she was the instigator behind the change in the legislation, to make sure that that sort of thing was prevented from happening again. She *should* have been the first woman bencher. However... She was a marvellous person, and she didn't complain.

AF Right. So I guess the role you are describing, as well as the social aspect of [the Women's Law Association] was advocacy for—

LL Women? Yes. We certainly did. There was, this was before my time, but in the 1930s there were several women working for the government, of Ontario. And there was a premier elected by the name of Mitchell Hepburn, and he went in, he was a great showman, and he just went through the civil service and dismissed half of them. And this was appalling because there was a terrible economic depression. And he dismissed, I think, two women lawyers: Laura Lees and Margaret Perney. Oh, these were two other early women active in the Women's Law Association. And the Women's Law Association, as I heard this story, worked very hard, and insisted, and I don't know what they did, and they had them reinstated, and their jobs back, because of what they did. So they did do work for women.

AF Now, I'd like to turn to the Soroptimist Club of Toronto that you were involved in as well.

LL Yes. This was a service club that was started somewhere in the United States and it's still, it became quite a large organization internationally. It's very active in England and in, all over Great Britain, Japan, Australia, all over the world. And the Toronto Club, when I joined in 1960, I think, there were about a hundred active members and these were all professional women, or executive businesswomen. There was one lawyer, one medical doctor, one dentist, this sort of thing. And they were a great group of women, and it was amazing what they had accomplished: one woman was the president of the Toronto Mutual Life Company, for example, another woman was a vice-president of Macmillans of Canada the publishers, and they were all very accomplished

women. There were school principals in the days before there were school principals, women who were principals of high schools which was quite unheard of, you know, forty-five years ago. And it was a marvellous group, and they raised money to help women in, who were poor, or in situations where there was no government or no public assistance. And, I remember, when I first joined, one of the great things that they did was help women who had cancer. They would organize taxis or drivers to take them to their treatment. These were the days before the Canadian Cancer Society provided that sort of assistance. They would help, they would help women who were terribly poor or on welfare. They did great work for women, and then they were involved in giving assistance to women to help them with their education. They did a lot of good work. And it was rather interesting, they raised money for the Elizabeth Fry Society. Gradually, we would start assisting some project, and then the government would take over! [laughs] So, it was rather interesting to see over the years that so many projects that we started to fund and help, were gradually taken over by the social services of the government.

AF Yes, why do you think that was?

LL Well, I think that, you know, public pressure against the governments, they became more socially conscious, which they are today, and then, I think, that's a very good thing.

AF And did the Soroptimist International have a fairly high profile in Toronto?

LL Yes. Yes.

AF Could that have been another reason?

LL Yes, it did in those years. It's become very quiescent now because most of the programmes that it-- I stopped being terribly active about 20 years ago I just didn't have time. I still support them monetarily, but most of the programmes that were where we were needed, we were no longer needed in and it began to lose its *raison d'être*.

AF How did you first become involved in it or hear about it?

LL Somebody invited me to join. Whether they needed a lawyer, because they only had one lawyer, and I don't know who my predecessor was.

AF So, the nature of your work initially was legal work?

LL For the Soroptimist Club? Oh, no, no, no. I was just—

AF But they wanted a lawyer?

LL None of us did the work. We were there as members of the service club raising money to help projects.

AF Yes, I understand-- Sorry, I understand that, but I thought—

LL Oh, no. Well, if they had any legal work that they needed done you did it for them all pro bono. That was your contribution.

AF Yes, yes.

LL Of course.

AF And you were the president from 1974 to 1976?

LL Yes. In that period we had a marvellous project: we raised \$15,000, we had a huge project called Equaba, at Ontario Place. And what we did raised \$15,000 for the cost of building a school in Ghana for boys. And the school is at Equava which is twenty miles south of Upper Volta right up, right up almost in the desert area, and one of our members was a lumber merchant, and she travelled to Ghana to buy lumber. She

imported lumber. And she ran into an Anglican priest, Dr. Father Rye, who was there working as a missionary in Ghana, and he said there was a great need of a school to teach the village boys a trade so that they would stay in their villages, and not go down to Accra as soon as, and just live in terrible poverty there. So, under his guidance, we became the catalyst for raising this money. And this friend, who was a very accomplished businesswoman, went to CEDA, and they said whatever dollar we raised, they would give three times as much. So we raised \$15,000, and they gave \$45,000, which was a lot of money in those years. And then the prime support relief fund at the Anglican church provided the rest of the money, and the school was built for boys in Equaba, Ghana. And, subsequently, two Anglican sisters who were working in the school with Father Rye, came to Canada. And we met them, and what they were teaching these boys was a trade, they were teaching the villagers about planting vegetables so they could eat all year, rather than just during the rainy season. And it was a great project. I'm not sure if it's still going or not. This was the great thing that happened, the project the club gave them when I was the president, and it was a very satisfying thing.

AF Yes, absolutely. Now I noticed that the years that you were president, '74 to '76, that was also when you first became bencher for the Law Society.

LL Yes, it was.

AF So, again, I'm wondering in terms of your time commitments, it must have been a huge time commitment to have both of those.

LL It was. It was a lot of time [laughs] out of my office, but it was alright. I managed. Those were the years when I had the energy to work nights until midnight,

and Saturday and Sundays. It was rather amusing: in 1973 when my husband came back into the practice, we moved our offices to 60 St. Clair East, and there was a doorman there, he was on duty until 11.30 every night. And at 11.30 he would come upstairs and he would stand in my office door, and say, "I'm not leaving until you leave!"

[Laughter]

LL He would accompany me down to the garage. Of course, I felt no danger. He was certainly protecting me to make sure I got in my car. So, anyway, that was fine.

AF And, again, you've mentioned some of the businesses that the women in the organization were involved in: can you think of particular women by name, who were involved in those years?

LL In the Soroptimist Club?

AF Yes.

LL Oh yes, there was Grace Nicholls, who was the president of the Toronto Mutual Life Assurance Company, there was Gladys Neill, who was vice-president of Macmillans, there was, oh dear, Hilda Ireland who was the principal of the Aden Park School, these were for children with, for girls, it was a school for girls with learning problems, there was [pause] I forget her name: Ireland? I'm sorry, I'd have to see something to remind myself. I hadn't thought of it for years. Oh, yes, there was Dr. Edna Moore who was director of nurses for the Ontario government. She was in charge, they had a nursing division then, and they ran the nurses for the province. She was a member, and she had been a nursing sister in the First World War. A very interesting person. When she died the Prime Minister of Canada was Lester Pearson, and he wrote a letter saying his major, he was a stretcher bearer for her at her hospital which was at the

front, in Europe, he wrote a letter of condolence to his major. There were some very interesting people.

AF Yes, yes. I'd like to turn now to some organizations that involved health issues that you've been involved in. The first that I have here is the Toronto Home Care Programme: is that the correct name?

LL I think it was the Home Care Programme, sorry, I forget, but probably that was right, yes.

AF Yes, and between 1975 and 1983, you were director?

LL Yes, yes.

AF Can you tell me how you became involved in this organization?

LL I was asked to join at there were nine directors, there was a Mr. King, who was a partner at Blake Cassels, I think he was a lawyer, I was a lawyer, there was Sister Josephine, who was the director, the chief executive officer of St. Joseph's Hospital, there was a Dr. Roth, who was a public health doctor, who had been the former deputy minister of health of Saskatchewan. I forget who else was on, but it was an interesting group. And, of course, what they were doing was providing home care for people who had left hospitals, so that they could leave the hospitals earlier. It still exists, and they had caregivers and people that did housekeeping work that they sent out. And they had nurses working for them, and they used nurses from visiting nurses' associations, the Elizabeth, I forget, the two major visiting nurses' association, they would send out-- And it was funded entirely by the provincial government, and we had an excellent administrator, Patricia Lee, and she, the administrative costs were about six percent of the money. The money really went to look after the patients, it didn't go to the

administration. It was well run. It was a very satisfying board to be on. Because they did good work.

AF And why were you asked to be on the board: was it because you had trained as a nurse, and were a lawyer?

LL Yes, I think so. And because I was a lawyer and a nurse, and they thought I would understand the problems. Which is true: I did! [laughs]

AF And who would you as a director who would you have reported to?

LL Oh no. No, the board, the board reported to the deputy minister of health.

AF You had worked for the provincial health--?

LL Yes, years before.

AF Yes. Did you serve on any other committees or in any other way for this organization?

LL No, oh no, there was just the board, yes.

AF And so it was just for those years?

LL Yes.

AF Now, you were also involved with the former, well not former, Women's College Hospital, when it was the Women's College Hospital

LL Right.

AF And I was wondering how you became involved with that, because you didn't train at that hospital.

LL No, I didn't. No, well, I was asked to be on the board, and what year was I on the board: was it the 1980s?

AF I don't have it here. I was going to ask you the same thing.

LL I was around for about eleven years, and, I'm sorry, I don't remember exactly. No, I was telephoned and asked if I would be on the Board. And it was a marvellous hospital. It's just a tragedy that it was, what's happened to it. It's insane, quite frankly. It made no economic or sense at all; they didn't save a cent. All it's done, of course, in the long run, is hurt the public. Because they've done away with an excellent small hospital that cared about the public and about the patients, and gave the patients superb care. And it was small enough that there could be supervision, and my quarrel, as an old nurse, with these huge hospitals, is that there isn't, nobody seems to know what's going on in them. But in this small hospital there was great supervision, and great care. It was a marvellous hospital.

AF So how small are we talking?

LL I'm not sure how many beds they had then, but, it runs in my mind that it was around three hundred, but I'm not certain. But it was a superb hospital.

AF Now it was set up, it's named the Women's College Hospital, so it's set up with the interests and needs of women, in particular.

LL No, when it was begun at the end of the nineteenth century, women doctors-- Women had been allowed to become doctors, and I'm not familiar with their fight to become doctors, but they weren't given any privileges in the major hospitals, so they opened their own hospital. And I think their first hospital was opened down in Parkdale. They, they bought a house and started their hospital there. And those early women doctors, eventually, and I don't know the whole history of it, but it was an interesting history eventually, then, they had this hospital built and extended. And, when I trained as a nurse, in 1942 to 1945, there were no women staff doctors in the Toronto General

Hospital. The war was on and they gave women privileges there because all of the men were off at war. And, as a nurse, I can tell you the women surgeons were superb, and the women obstetricians were excellent, and the women surgeons were so good that, I can tell you, that when I had to have surgery in 1951, some minor surgery, I went to one of the women surgeons that I had known, and I went to the Women's College Hospital!

AF Right.

LL They were great doctors. Now, eventually, they were allowed to be on the staff of the major hospitals, but it took years before the men allowed them in. And those women doctors were, you know, first class, as they are today. That's another interesting battle that [laughs] was won. But that's how the Women's College Hospital started. And this is why I was always a great supporter of it. And, I, you know, I'm not, I just think that it deserved to be continued. Now, mind you, there were male, many of their staff doctors, when I was on the board, were very good male doctors. As a matter of fact, the professor of obstetrics was on the staff of Women's College when I was on the board there, you know, so it had changed, you know, and it had male and female doctors. But the history of it, I find fascinating, because I remember the days when that was the only place a woman could be a surgeon.

END OF DISK ONE

DISK TWO: INTERVIEW CONTINUES

AF This is the second disk, Treasurers' Project for the Law Society of Upper Canada, Mrs. Laura Legge, fourth interview. Just continuing our interview of your committee and volunteer work.

....

AF So, we're up to looking at the business organizations that you've been involved in. And I'd like to start by asking you about the Toronto Economic Development Corporation. You said that you had been involved in that?

LL Yes, this was established by Arthur Eggleton, when he was Mayor of Toronto, and the mandate that he gave this Commission was to develop the harbour lands, so that it would generate jobs to stay in the city of Toronto, so that it would enlarge our tax base here, and keep jobs in Toronto. He was concerned about Canada, about Toronto, becoming dependent on banks and financial institutions. And, there, there are about a thousand acres of undeveloped land down around the harbour front, all owned by, or primarily owned by, the Toronto Harbour Commission. The Toronto Harbour Commission, of course, the lands are owned in effect by the federal government, vested in the Toronto Harbour Commission. The Toronto Harbour Commission is comprised of one appointment by the federal government, and two appointments of councillors of the City of Toronto. And our mandate was to come up with proposals acceptable to the Toronto Harbour Commission for the development of that land, to enhance the development of factories, or whatever was compatible, to keep jobs in the city of Toronto.

AF Right. So, what year would it have been established, approximately?

LL You know, I'm sorry, I would have thought it was when Mr. Eggleton was mayor which was sometime about '85 '86, I think.

AF Okay. And why were you particularly drawn to this organization?

LL Well, I was asked to be on it, and I was, I'm interested in the city of Toronto. I think it's a wonderful city, and if we can do something to make certain that we retain our tax base and the-- One of the first mandates we had, Dover Elevators had a huge plant over on John Street in Toronto, I think where the, I think, the land was being taken over, I think it's where the Metropolitan City Hall is now, Metropolitan City Hall. And they were looking for alternative space for their factory. And they had, as I recall, about 560 workmen and it was going to be a real challenge to keep those workmen in Toronto. And at the top of the Leslie Street spit there is, I don't know how many acres, but a good many acres of land that was undeveloped, and we were, that was there was a great plan, that that was going to be an industrial park. And it was a perfect fit for the Dover Elevator to relocate there, and their workmen who lived in Toronto wouldn't have to move, and we would keep them in Toronto, we would keep our tax base, and it sounded like a marvellous idea. We started negotiations with Dover Elevator, they agreed to buy seven acres of land in the Leslie Street spit. We had a professional evaluation that it was going to be approx \$235,000 an acre. However, so Dover Elevator-- We approached the Toronto Harbour Commission and eventually they gave us their verbal approval, go ahead, or, we had something in writing from them, and tell Dover Elevator that it's just a matter of completing the paperwork. So Dover Elevator went in and spent several million dollars putting in a cement base down because of the contaminated soil. And then the City of Toronto, the City of Toronto Harbour Commission and I, this was really

a very bad situation. There were two councillors, Nadine Nowlan and Betty Disero, who both got very concerned, and they said we had made a bad deal with Dover Elevator, and we had underestimated the value of the land. And they went to some realtor who told them the land was worth \$900,000 an acre. So Dover, the fight was then going on, and the Toronto Development Corporation was being really maligned about our negotiations, so Dover Elevators said, "Who needs it?" They went out to Mississauga and were welcomed by the City of Mississauga, and that is where they are now located. So what has happened to the land at the top of the Lesley Street spit? It is still there, completely undeveloped. The land that we were selling for \$235,000 an acre is, in fact, I'm told that it has a negative value because of its contamination. And nobody will touch it. Because to go in, and clean it up, costs more. I'm told, I don't know, I haven't seen the evidence, I'm told that it has PCBs and methane in it, so it's a great pity that we lost that. I'm sure everybody meant well, but it was bad judgment on somebody's part. So that was the sort of thing we were involved in. One of the other things, there was a huge-- We were very concerned, as a Commission, about how to clean the soil that had been contaminated down there. And there were various things: there were oil tank farms there, and, of course, the oil tanks, over the years, had leaked, and how were we able to clean that soil, we were involved in that. We had a proposal to develop one of the unused piers. It was very interesting, and I'm sad to say that it appears that absolutely nothing has come of it. [laughs] And I think, I don't know whether the Commission is still in existence, or not. But, you know, once you're dealing with two levels, well, really, three levels of government, and various personalities, it gets to be very difficult. But it was interesting.

AF How many years would you have been involved in it?

LL Well, six or seven or more?

AF From the early years?

LL From its inception for some time.

AF Yes. Right. Now you were also a member of the Toronto Board of Trade.

LL For a very short while.

AF A short while?

LL Yes, and I was not very active in it. I went to meetings and it was interesting to see and of course that organization is, I think, it's primarily a lobby group for businessmen, and it was interesting the period I was there, but I think I made no contribution.

AF Right. I wanted to also ask you about your association with the Canada Life Assurance Company: what that connection was?

LL Well, I, I don't know what the connection was. I was asked to become a director in 1985. I was there until 1999 I guess, yes. That was [pause] that was a very satisfying connection and period. The Canada Life, which then was a mutual company, and it was most impressive. In this day, when it's very easy to be labelling corporations as psychopaths, I could tell you that that was one corporation that certainly wasn't. The people involved, at every level, from my experience, were very honorable, and concerned men. The chairman and the presidents, when I was there, were most impressive people. And they were concerned about ethics, and of the ethics of the company, and of the people. And it was a great company. I'm sorry that it has been taken over. I have no idea of what is going on now, but it certainly in my association, it was very pleasant, and a very fine company.

AF So, who would have asked you to join?

LL Well, I received a phone call from the chairman of the board one day to go to lunch. I don't know why [laughs], but I enjoyed my association with them very much.

AF And what would your role as director have involved?

LL Well, you went to a meeting once a month, I was on the, I was chairman of one committee, the compliance committee, I, they every month, they sent out a list of all of the investments that the Board had, something this thick [demonstrating four inches or so]: every bond, every stock, they had bought, or sold was there for us to approve, or disapprove. And, we, as directors, kept a very close eye on what was going on. And certainly the appointment of senior executives was brought to the board for approval, or disapproval, and recommendations were made. It was, it was a well-run corporation.

AF Did you do any insurance work--?

LL Before?

AF Yes.

LL No.

AF So there's no connection there?

LL No, no connection and it was a great education!

[Laughter]

AF Now, while you were doing that work for them, while you were director, were you working for any other organizations as well, any other committees at that time because that seems to be the end of your committee work, other than your bencher responsibilities?

LL No. Well, I was a bencher in that period, I was on the Toronto Economic Development Corporation, I was a Commissioner of the Parking Authority of Toronto, I was in the Soroptimist Club, I was, what else? And there were other things, yes.

AF Now, you just mentioned the Ontario Safety League: I wanted to, or did you? I wanted to also ask about the Toronto Parking Authority. So, I was intrigued by both of them, how you came to be involved with them.

LL Well, I was asked to be a Commissioner of the Parking Authority by a city official. Of course, Toronto was the one organization in greater Toronto that had provided these municipal parking garages, which were, the parking is much less expensive than the commercial ones and they're very important for anybody who drives in Toronto. And we, the Parking Commission, really, ran the garages and parking lots that the City of Toronto owned. The City of Toronto still owns them, and they're still there, and they're still very well run. And, of course, the people who are running them today, well, of course, I knew them when I was a commissioner. That was an interesting period.

AF What years would this have been, approximately?

LL Oh dear, it seems to me, from about '85 to '91, or something, I'm not certain. I could check that.

AF Right. And what about the Ontario Safety League?

LL Well, that's a marvellous organization. It's concerned primarily with safety on the highways, and that group does great work. They're involved in safe driving, in a programme to teach young drivers in driving schools. When I was there we had a great programme in teaching motor cycle safety. And they are concerned, you know, with

safety on the roads. They give advice to the government. That is a very important group. And the one thing that is terribly important is their involvement with driving schools, to try to ensure that the people who are running the driving schools are honest, and teach the drivers properly. And that's primarily what they do.

AF And this was primarily from 1986 to 1988? Does that sound right?

LL Oh no, no. I was there for six years.

AF So, you were chair of the board in those years?

LL I was chairman of the board, I suppose, from 1986 to 1988. I'm not certain when.

AF And is that government-funded?

LL No.

AF It's all private?

LL Yes.

AF OK.

LL Oh, there was something else I was involved with, talking about government funding. That was Credit, Metropolitan Toronto Credit Counselling Service.

AF So, tell me about that.

LL That's a marvellous organization. When I was first asked to join I declined, and then they kept twisting my arm until I did, and I was involved in that for six years. And that is a voluntary organization not-for-profit group. And what they do, they help people who find themselves hopelessly in debt, and they gave them, literally, credit counselling. And it's a not-for-profit organization, they, there are people in this city who, and I was amazed to find out, will owe \$75,000 on their credit cards, and have no money

and have literally no income. And what these people do, the credit counsellors, they sit down with them, they make out a budget, they make arrangements with the credit card companies to forego interest, so that these people pay back the principal and they work with them until they have them out of debt. And they help thousands of people in this city. They started, when I first started, there was one office, and when I left, I think they had four or five offices, and now I don't know how many offices they have in Metropolitan Toronto. And they really help people who are conscientious people who want to pay their debts. It's a great organization, and it's a not-for-profit. It started off, when I was first there, being funded by the government, and then when the NDP government was in power, they stopped funding, which sounds rather strange because they're supposed to be concerned with the poor. However, we thought that the world had come to an end, but we got busy, and it was the best thing that ever happened. Because it's expanded, it's now funded, for example, if someone owes fifty thousand dollars on cards, we have a deal with the credit card company every cent we collect for them, we'll keep X percent. It's now self-funding and it's not-for-profit. And everybody's happy. And they do great work.

AF Yes. It sounds from what you've said that your high profile in other aspects of your life have called attention to you, and so then you've been asked to participate in a variety of different organization: is this how it worked?

LL I don't know. Probably.

AF Now the last two organizations – unless you think of any others – the last two are the Ontario College of the Arts, and your work in fundraising for Trinity College, University of Toronto.

LL Yes, I, Trinity College I joined the corporation of Trinity College in 1969. I was there until '75 and every year I would be involved in their fundraising campaigns. And I enjoyed it. I was, that was Trinity College. Our daughter, I got involved there because my daughter was a student there. That's where she got her undergraduate degree. And I don't know how, who asked me to do it, how I got involved, but I was asked to get involved with the corporation, and did their fundraising, and did for six years and enjoyed it. I made hundreds of phone calls. [laughs] That's why I always feel sympathetic for people who are calling from various institutions. And what was the other one you asked me about?

AF The Ontario College of the Arts.

LL Oh, that was great. The Minister of Education called me and asked me to be on the board of that, whatever year I was on, Dr. Betty Stevenson. And she told me that she wanted me to be on the board and she wanted me to be chair of the Compensation Committee. And I didn't know what the Compensation Committee was. [laughs] Dr. Betty Stevenson knew me [laughs] and the reason was that everyone was threatening to go on strike and the Compensation Committee was the committee that had to deal with the unions there. So that was an interesting period, and we settled everything. The faculty were threatening to go on strike, as were the administration. And, this was years ago, the faculty had organized the part-time staff. And you can understand that the Ontario College of Art had a finite amount of money, and no one is going to give money to that organization (certainly not in those years), and the, we had X dollars to pay the faculty. And they came in, their lawyer, and their union leader, and started making their demands, and I just looked at the lawyer and said, "Michael, we have X dollars. You go

out and you decide how you want to divide it up. If the faculty wants to increase the salary paid to part-time workers, we will agree with it. Whatever you want to do, you go out and divide up the money.” And that was the end of it. Because they knew, and I said, “We have no other money, and no other place to get the money.” And we didn’t. That was interesting. That was the shortest union negotiation that ever took place. [laughs] So Dr. Stevenson had asked me to do it, because I guess she knew I would get to the point. There was no point in talking. There was no money.

AF So you were on the council for about three years: 1980 to 1983?

LL Yes, I was. And when I became Treasurer of the Law Society I resigned from there. Because that did take a lot of time.

AF Were you involved in any other educational institution? Or did it just happen that you were called for this particular work?

LL I think so. I think Trinity College and Ontario College of the Arts were the only two.

AF There is one other organization which I wanted to ask you about and that’s the Federation of Law Societies (Ontario) and your work in that.

LL The Federation of Law Societies of Canada, not Ontario.

AF I’m sorry, the Ontario branch of—

LL No, no. The Federation of Law Societies of Canada is the federation of all the law societies of Canada.

AF Yes.

LL And I was involved in it for Ontario, that’s correct, for Upper Canada.

AF Yes. Yes.

LL And that's a marvellous organization, and it's, of course, become very active, and it's become increasingly important as the years have gone by. And it's been very much involved with the mobility of lawyers across Canada. When I was there, what the federation does, it looks at problems that are common to all lawyers in Canada, and tries to negotiate with the various law societies to address those problems. And when I was there, one of the great problems was insurance. And, I think that, I haven't followed it closely since, but I think that our insurer now, I don't remember if we insured the Newfoundland lawyers, but there's certainly some cooperation, and it's very important. Ontario has the largest, the largest by far, number of lawyers in Canada but it's very important that there be cooperation and assistance. And what I've seen in recent years is the mobility of lawyers, and the ease with which they can now move from province to province, and that has all been negotiated through the Federation of Law Societies. The other thing the Federation of Law Societies does, it looks at the credentials coming in from other countries, assesses them, they have this special committee, it says you will have the equivalent of the Canadian LL.B if you take these courses, and that's very important. And when you have those courses you may article and you may become a lawyer here. So the Federation of Law Societies has, over the years, and still is, providing a very important function. And, if we're going to be a country, I think it's necessary.

AF Yes. Now, you were president [of the Federation of Law Societies] in 1988? So that was some years after having been Treasurer for the Law Society.

LL Yes. What the Federation did then, it moved the presidency around from province to province, and it was Ontario's turn. It had nothing to do with my prowess, it just had to do with the fact that I was from Ontario, and it was Ontario's turn.

AF Right. But they could have picked another lawyer. [laughs]

LL That's right.

AF I'm wondering if it's common for former Treasurers to be-- Is there any connection?

LL Oh yes, I think so. Well, I was interested in the Federation because I was interested-- We had mobility of LL.Bs because an LL.B from anywhere in Canada was allowed to article and become a lawyer here, and I was concerned about the standards of education in Canada so, not that I made any impression there, even though I tried.

AF Did this involve a lot of travel?

LL Did it involve a lot of travel? A fair amount, yes. Many trips to Montreal.

AF Right. Just to conclude: everything you've told me today is about a life of outstanding service to the community, and I wondered if you would like to say a final word about your experience in serving on all of these committees over so many years? Any final thoughts you'd like to share?

LL No, it was a very fulfilling, I've had a very fulfilling life, and I've been very fortunate that I've been able to do this. And I trust that I have made some contribution. However, that's all any of us can do in life, is do what we can while we're here, and hope we've made a contribution.

AF Thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW

LAURA LEGGE PHOTOS

INTERVIEW NUMBER 4**DATE: JULY 29, 2004****PLACE: LEGGE AND LEGGE, BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS
65 ST. CLAIR AVE. E., TORONTO****INTERVIEWER: ALISON FORREST****MEDIA: 2 MINI-DISKS APPROX. 56:23 AND 25:49 MINUTES IN LENGTH,
AND ONE VIDEO RECORDING OF SAME. Tracks 2-5 of second mini-disk
record description of several of a number of photos to be donated to Law Society.****Photos 1 and 2**

Photo taken in 1988 when Mrs. Legge was Treasurer of the Law Society for two months and Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister of Britain, was made an Honorary bencher of the Law Society of Upper Canada.

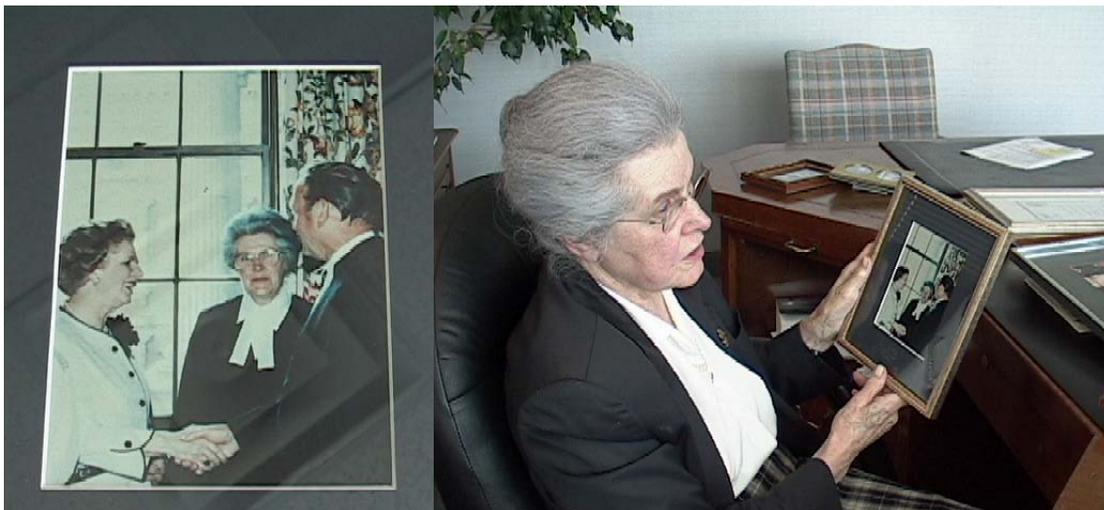


Photo 3
Photo of the Bicentennial Commission.



Photo 4



The Honourable Lincoln Alexander with Mrs. Legge.

Photo 5

Photo of the female benchers of the Law Society of Upper Canada taken before the last election, in 2004.

