



Historical Society of the District of Columbia Circuit

Newsletter # 44 - July 2020

Historical Society of the D.C. Circuit - www.dcchs.org

COVID 19: NEW CHALLENGES AND NEW APPROACHES



The novel coronavirus (or COVID 19) presented the Society with challenges and opportunities alike over the past three months.

An Unprecedented Board Meeting

The Society's annual Board meeting traditionally takes place at the Courthouse. This year, that was not possible, but that did not stop the Society's meeting. On April 28, 2020, 46 current and future Society Board members, officers, consultants, and staff logged on through their home computers and participated remotely and actively in the Society's first-ever virtual meeting. All items on the agenda were covered in the 1 1/2 hour meeting, including election of new Board members, reports from seven committees, a financial update, and reports from Society President Jim Rocap and Chair Steve Pollak.

Intimate Oral History Interviews --- from afar

When COVID 19 forced businesses to shut down, Sally Gere, former Deputy Attorney General in the Office of the Attorney General of the District of Columbia, and her interviewer, Barbara Kagan, former Public Service Counsel at Steptoe & Johnson, were unable to meet in person to hold an oral history interview. Mike Terry, former Circuit Mediator, and his interviewer Stephanie W. Wang, Steptoe Associate, faced the same problem.

Each team decided to move forward so as not to "lose the thread." Using ZOOM for their third interview, Sally and Barbara had a successful two-hour session that "seemed

personal.” They could see each other throughout the interview. According to Barbara, “I felt almost as comfortable as I felt when we met in person.” Sally added, “If we hadn’t held an earlier interview or two, this might have not worked as well, but I would definitely endorse the approach when in-person sessions are not possible and long delays between interviews would otherwise be the norm.”

Mike found the ZOOM session, their second, “convenient – we could each be at home. It was the next best thing to being there.” Stephanie agreed, having found the virtual meeting “a good substitute.”

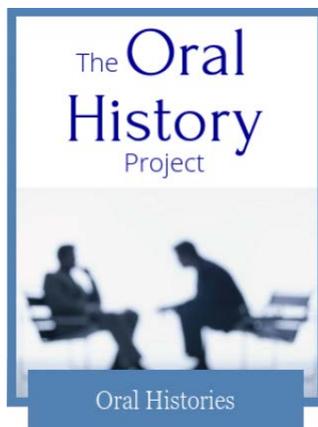
Two Popular Annual Programs to Be Rescheduled



For many years, the Society has presented a special program in the Ceremonial Courtroom on a notable case decision and its historical legacy. This year, plans were fully in place for a June 2020 program on the 2001 *U.S. v. Microsoft* antitrust decision when COVID hit, and it had to be postponed. For the same reason, the annual Fall program for Law Clerks, featuring presentations by former law clerks, has been postponed. The Society looks forward to presenting both programs as soon as circumstances permit.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SOCIETY’S ORAL HISTORY

PROGRAM



The Society’s Oral History Collection Expands with the Addition of 19 Oral Histories of Trailblazing Women in the Law

In its 30-year history, the Historical Society has taken the oral histories of over 100 judges, attorneys, and others who have served in, or who have been actively involved with, the courts of the D.C. Circuit. Not surprisingly, therefore, the Society is excited to be able to highlight 19 additional oral histories -- originally taken by the Women Trailblazers Project of the American Bar

Association -- of outstanding women judges and lawyers with deep ties to the District of Columbia and the federal courts here. Their stories are an important part of the history of the administration of justice in the independent federal courts of this circuit and a welcome addition to the Society’s historical archive.

The American Bar Association has granted a license to the Society to publish these 19 histories and add them to its archive. The oral histories track the experiences and

achievements of these remarkable women as well as the challenges they faced as they entered the legal profession beginning in the 1940s.

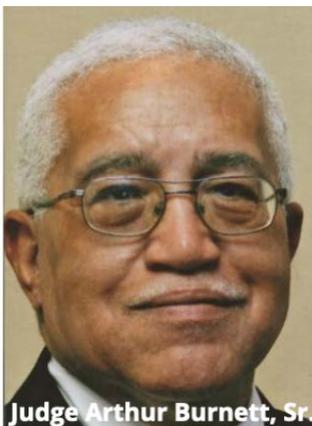
Visit the Society's website at www.dcchs.org in the coming months to read the oral histories of Barbara Babcock, Nancy Duff Campbell, Sara-Ann Determan, Jamie Gorelick, Marcia Greenberger, Zona Hostetler, Patricia King, Esther Lardent, Judith Lichtman, Janet Reno, Florence Roisman, Lois Schiffer, Linda Singer, Judge Fern Smith, Marna Tucker, Judith Winston, and Judge Rya Zobel.

The oral histories of Brooksley Born and Judge Gladys Kessler, also in the collection, are temporarily under seal.

Newly Released Oral Histories

Dean Katherine Shelton Broderick

It would be hard to identify anyone with more hands-on experience in founding, funding, staffing, building, and operating a major law school than Katherine Shelton ("Shelley") Broderick. [Her oral history](#) describes her role in establishing the University of the District of Columbia David A. Clarke School of Law, where she also served as Dean for twenty years. Previously, Dean Broderick played a leadership role at both the Antioch Law School and the District of Columbia School of Law. In her oral history, Dean Broderick talks about representing indigent clients in the D.C. courts, and reflects on working with (and against) a host of DC political luminaries. Robert N. Gross, himself an educator and historian, conducted Dean Broderick's oral history and prepared the [attached summary](#).

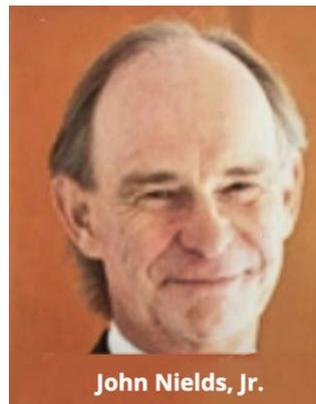


Judge Arthur Burnett, Sr.

The first African American in the nation to be named a federal Magistrate Judge, Arthur Burnett helped to initiate a number of criminal and civil reforms during his 14-year tenure. He also served as a judge on the D.C. Superior Court. [In his oral history](#), Judge Burnett describes his experiences growing up in the segregated South in a farmhouse without running water, how and why the Commonwealth of Virginia agreed to pay his tuition and living expenses at NYU Law School, and his experiences in the Department of Justice's Honors Program and with Attorney General Robert Kennedy, and more, as noted in [an article](#) by William Marmon, Judge Burnett's interviewer.

John Nields, Jr.

John Nields is best known for his televised role as chief counsel to the congressional committee that investigated Iran-Contra. But even beyond that experience, as he describes in his [oral history](#), Nields has played an outsized role as counsel in numerous other matters of public attention, including the Koreagate scandal, the prosecution of Mark Felt (of "Deep Throat" fame), and the defense of Clinton aide Webster Hubbell. Elizabeth A. Cavanagh, who conducted Nields's oral history, has prepared a [summary](#) of its many highlights.



Highlights from Oral Histories in the Society's Archive

Probing articles about the lives of [District Judge Louis Oberdorfer](#), [John Pickering](#), and [Stanley Temko](#), written by attorneys conversant with their oral histories, reveal some telling moments in their careers as well as anecdotes and reflections about the courts and the practice of law in the District of Columbia.

[HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD NEWS](#)

The Society welcomed six new Board members at its annual meeting on April 28, 2020:

Jan Crawford - Chief Legal Correspondent, CBS News

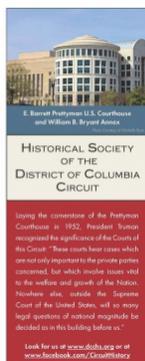
Sara Kropf - Partner, Kropf Moseley

Jessie K. Liu - Former U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia

William F. Marmon - Former Lawyer with Verizon/MCA and Journalist

Hon. Rudolph D. Moss - Judge, U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia

Steven A. Steinbach - History Department, Sidwell Friends School



OUR UPDATED BROCHURE

The Society has updated its Membership Brochure to reflect changes in membership of the Board of Directors and in the law firms supporting the Society. The Brochure also includes thumbnail descriptions of current programs and activities. [Take a look.](#)

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