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Sarah Smith Velman Tintor
University of San Diego School of Law

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CONVERSATIONS IN LEGAL EDUCATION:

ORAL HISTORIES OF THE FIRST HALF-CENTURY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO SCHOOL OF LAW

Narrator: Sarah Smith Velman Tintor

Interviewer: Ruth Levor

Recorder: Ruth Levor

Date: October 25, 2005

Accession No.: OH-LRC-Tintor-1a

TAPE 1a: SIDE A



RL: This is an interview of Sarah Smith Velman Tintor for the project: Conversations in Legal Education: Oral Histories of the First Half-Century of the University of San Diego School of Law. The interview is being conducted by Ruth Levor in Ms. Tintor's home on October 25th, 2005. This is the first session of this set of interviews. Tapes and transcripts of this interview will be archived at the University of San Diego's Copley Library.

First of all, I want to thank you for agreeing to let me come to your lovely home here and to talk to you about some really long ago memories of you as the first woman faculty member at the University of San Diego School of Law. I thought we'd start by talking about your life a little bit before you came to USD, just to get some background. Where did you grow up?

ST: In northwestern Ohio, in Bryan, Ohio, a little town of about ten thousand.

RL: Which largest city is it near?

ST: It's between Toledo and Fort Wayne.

RL: What were your parents' occupations?

ST: Well, my father was an accountant, and my mother, before she got married, was a home economics teacher. She went to Ohio State.

RL: Were they from Ohio originally?

ST: Yes, my father was a preacher's son, and my mother had one sister who I was very fond of, my Aunt Zelma. My grandfather was a mechanic in the little town of Edgerton, where I was born.

RL: Were they high school sweethearts, do you think?

ST: My father's family moved there when they were in junior high, and that was it, but they didn't get married until my mom finished college and three years of teaching, because if one married back then, they lost their job.

RL: That's correct. You have this background of an educated mother.

ST: And my father started college, but the finances were such that he had to quit and go home and support the parents.

RL: Now, these many years later, you live here in southern California with your current husband. Will you tell us a little bit about him?

ST: Well, he also grew up in Ohio. I didn't know him when I lived in Ohio, but he grew up in Massillon, Ohio, which is close to Cleveland. He went into the Marines right out of high school. He was picked for the Freedom Train, which is another story, and then he went on that terrible march in Korea. I don't know much about that. We don't talk about that, but then he was a guard at The Hague in the Netherlands.

RL: Did he remain in the military?

ST: No, not career-wise. He was an engineer with the telephone department. He met his first wife in the Netherlands and had two children.

RL: I see, and you met here in southern California?

ST: Right.

RL: Now, can you think back and tell me what led you to decide to study law in the first place.

ST: Well, my first husband had graduated from the University of Iowa law school, and he was teaching Business Law at Ohio State where I was a student. We became acquainted. We got married at Christmas time, and I transferred to the University of Michigan, because he was in his second semester of graduate law work at the University of Michigan, and I could graduate from there in the same amount of time that I could graduate from Ohio State. So my Bachelor's of Business Administration is from the University of Michigan.

Then, we returned to Ohio State, and I got an M.A. in accounting. My husband, Bill Velman, was teaching Business Law, went back to teaching Business Law. Well, after receiving my Master's in accounting, I taught accounting for three years at Ohio Wesleyan University. This was about a twenty-five mile commute from Upper Arlington, a suburb of Columbus. If I wanted to stay in the academic world, I either had to get a Ph.D. in accounting or to do something else, and a Ph.D. in accounting sounded boring, so I decided to enroll in the law school.

I had a high GPA and a good LSAT score, so I was one of four women in that class of about a hundred and twenty. It was kind of strange. Several of my students at Ohio Wesleyan either were one year ahead of me in law school or classmates of mine [chuckle].

I don't know what the question was ...

RL: Well, we were talking about how you came to study law.

ST: Well, that's it. I really enjoyed law school. My two close friends to this day just don't understand that statement at all, because all they wanted to do was get out, but I didn't feel any animosity from my classmates nor from the faculty. It was really a level playing field. Two of my best friends in law school were accounting majors. Most of us were married, so it was go to class, study, go home, study. There was no law school social life.

We were warned that a third of us would flunk out, and I later learned that this was a predetermined number. The Ohio educational philosophy seemed to be that anyone who could graduate from high school could go to Ohio State, and anyone who could graduate from Ohio State could go to law school if they had the LSAT. Well, this has since changed.

There were no women professors. There were three women in the class ahead of me and none that I remember in the third-year class. One of the women in the class ahead of me was on the accelerated program, which meant that she went in the summers and graduated in December, and I really missed her when she graduated. She and her husband and I still remain good friends.

RL: Do you know of these classmates and the people in the class ahead of you of women what their career paths were?

ST: Well, the only ones that I know for sure are Jane, my good friend, first went to work in Washington, D.C. for the Commerce Department, and then she married Dean and went back to Sandusky, Ohio. After her two girls became of school age, she began to practice law on her own. She never did practice with her husband. She was pretty successful and eventually ran for and became a probate judge.

We laugh about that because Decedents' Estates is the only class that we had together, and I got an A, and she got a C! [laughter]

RL: Funny how those things turn out, isn't it?

ST: Right, yes, so we both sort of ended up in the same area but doing different things.

One of the other women was already a doctor, an M.D., an anesthesiologist, and I think her practice consisted of malpractice, what she did in the legal world anyway.

The other woman was a black woman whose father was the pastor of one of the largest, well, probably the largest, black church in Columbus, Ohio. She passed the California bar. She come out here and worked one summer between I think it was her second and third year, met her husband-to-be, then moved out here, passed the bar, worked for the Public Utilities Commission and worked for Legal Aid. Now, I think she, last I heard, she was, I think, an executive with Kaiser, so she just had a really good career in different areas.

That's about all I know about the women. There were three other women in my class. One didn't make it grade-wise, and I really don't know what happened to the other two. They graduated, but we were never really friendly. We all shared the same lounge and locker space area, but I don't know what happened to them.

RL: I guess my question following up on that is somewhat intangible, but you alluded to the fact that women were quite a minority, and I'm thinking of the whole mindset that led to that condition, that it wasn't normal for women to think of education for a career, perhaps to seek an education to meet a mate but not for a career, and so I'm trying to get a sense of what made you motivated in that way. Is there anything you can point to?

ST: No, except that I had business law courses as an accounting major, and I liked it, and I just wanted to go on and get more education, and I thought, "Well, that's a good place to go."

I liked law school, I really did. We weren't competitive in law school. I would exchange my notes with two classmates who were kind of my best friends. They were first and second in the class, and I think I was third. On holidays, especially the Jewish holidays, I would put extra copies, carbon copies, in my typewriter and give them my notes. I always typed my notes after class, the Royal Standard, no copy machines back then.

I was on law review, Order of the Coif, and graduated third in my class, so to me, it was a success. But then, the bomb dropped, because the job interviewing began. When the interviews were posted on the board as to who was interviewing, my name wasn't up there, and I had signed up for all the interviews in Columbus, because my job market was limited to Columbus. I always checked with the front office to see if there had been a mistake. No, the firms just didn't want to talk to women, period, end of story. They could do that then. They could just say it outright.

Well, I did get an offer from one of the big ten public accounting firms, which was then Ernst and Ernst. The following week, I received an offer from Ohio State to teach Tax for a year, and that was quite a dilemma as to which I should take.

I took the public accounting offer. I don't know if that was a mistake or not, but anyway, I needed the year of experience to get my C.P.A. I had taken the exam and passed the whole thing when I was a freshman in law school. I figured if I don't do it now after teaching it, I probably never will. I needed to get that year's experience to get certified.

I wanted to work for Arthur Anderson because they had a big tax department, but that job went to a classmate with grades in the middle of the class. They wouldn't even talk to me, not even talk to me.

When I got to Ernst and Ernst, there was prejudice there too. If it hadn't been for the fellow I shared the office with, who happened to be in grad school, I think, a year ahead of me, I probably would have just been very unhappy, but he was a very nice guy, so they pulled him off the audit staff during the tax season.

Anyway, when I got to the office, they sent me only to small clients like doctors' offices and little old ladies who kept trust funds and the convent, farm implement, and other small businesses. My boss would always ask the client about my coming. Would it be okay if they sent a woman out? Well, they'd rather not.

I had a secretary problem too, because she would only work for my boss, and I first had to put everything through him, so one day, I just carried in my portable typewriter right past her. At least, I could type my own notes. No typewriter was furnished to me there.

After my mandatory experience of a year was finished there, I quit and went back to Ohio State as a semi-administrator, sort of sorting out the various contributions to the law school, advising freshman students. I had to work about every Saturday morning, just in case someone came by who was interested in Ohio State law school.

RL: So the prejudice came more after law school.

ST: Oh, yes! In law school, I had no problem. I had no problem with the faculty, nor with my classmates. No, it was the job market.

RL: Was your family supportive of your pursuing higher education?

ST: Oh, yes. No problem there.

RL: Well, you're in good company with Sandra Day O'Connor, who of course tells similar stories.

ST: Oh, yes, I've heard.

RL: Well, I think it's important to make a record of those experiences for people to understand.

ST: Well, I used to be quite envious because my classmates and I who were working downtown would meet maybe once a month for lunch, and they were working for law firms, and I was working for a public accounting firm, not even getting the experience that I wanted, which was in tax. I was just one of two people in the tax department until tax time when they brought my friend in.

RL: Have there been any other lawyers in your family?

ST: No, none at all.

RL: I want to back up a little bit. I kind of jumped to law school right away without talking about your primary and secondary education—where you went to school, were they public schools?

ST: They were public schools and all in Bryan, Ohio.

RL: In school at that time, did you feel encouraged as a young girl to perform to your maximum, to go as far as you could go?

ST: Yes, I always was competitive, but one of my best friends was my competition, and I think that was excellent. Her father was the superintendent of the county schools that Bryan didn't fall under, but he would always give me extra books.

In a way, I was competing with Jane, because that was good. There were other smart kids in the class, of course. I think I graduated with a four point. I just was always that way.

RL: Do you know where she went to college?

ST: Ohio State.

RL: You both did?

ST: Yes.

RL: Did you continue to compete with each other?

ST: No, because she and I were in different dorms, and she was in education. I bounced back and forth between education, maybe planning to teach Business Education. That would be an elective, and there wouldn't be any disciplinary problems. That's how I got interested in accounting at that level.

No, we saw each other, but we didn't pal around much at that point, just because of the courses that she was taking and the courses that I was taking.

RL: Did you have any favorite professors in law school that you remember?

ST: Yes, there were some really nice people. Mr. Wills was really nice. He taught Civil Procedure, and I think I took other courses from him. The one I mentioned that Jane and I were together in he taught. It was called Decedents' Estates. He was just a nice man.

Professor Latin, he went from there to Hastings, I think, the year that I graduated. There was another one, Vaughn Ball, who came out to California. I believe he has died. Well, all those people I mentioned I think have died.

Actually, there were no professors that I really didn't like. I mean, there were some that I wasn't real crazy about, but ... long pause here—I'm trying to think. I have to see the picture of exactly who I had.

RL: I understand. You talked about being on law review. What was that like?

ST: Well, that was interesting. You know, you had to write a couple of articles before you made it. I was editor of, I think, I can't remember for sure, but I think it was articles that faculty submit. It was a lot of work.

I wasn't social in law school. Like I say, we had no social life. I went back to one reunion. I wanted to go to the other one, but I had some cataract surgery and couldn't make that one. A very small group of people had attended. There have been quite a few deaths in that class, premature I would say. It's a small class, too. There were only about eighty of us. You know, a hundred and twenty started, and about eighty finished.

RL: I think they've grown in size at Ohio State since then, the student body.

ST: Oh, yes, I'm sure, and the building has all been ... It was a new building really when I went there, and then they've done a massive renovation.

RL: After leaving the accounting firm and coming back and doing some teaching, what was your path to really move into law teaching?

ST: Well, my husband wanted to leave Business Law teaching and get into law school teaching. All of the AA LS meetings were in Chicago at that time. They didn't have them around the country. It was after, of course, I did what I told you I did. We went to Chicago, and then we both got an offer from USD.

Now, I wasn't crazy about coming out here. My family was in Ohio and Michigan. I have one brother. We flew out for a long weekend to check the university, and at that time, Joe Sinclitico was dean. Frank Engfelt was here, Dick Kelly, Gene Reynolds, and Joe Brock. That was the faculty.

The year we were hired was nineteen sixty-five. That same year, Joe Darby, John Winters and another person who left after a year were hired, so the faculty doubled when we came [chuckle].

RL: That was Sandoval, the other person?

ST: Santa-Pinter was his name.

RL: Santa-Pinter, right.

ST: I can't remember where he was from. It might have been Puerto Rico. I'm not sure, but he was just here a year.

RL: So you came out and saw the university. What did it look like at that time? Very different from now?

ST: It's just spread out a lot. The law school, as far as what it looked like, was not that much different. Oh, it's been changed so much internally that you'd have to have an architect show you what it was and the stages that it went through. The faculty lounge was to the right as you went through the doors and then the dean's office was to the left, same as it is now. There's no point in my going into the architecture. Somebody else can tell you all about that.

RL: I was thinking more about impressions. You know, coming from the Midwest, it's very different to come out to southern California.

ST: Yes, it was. The people were nice though. I still couldn't quite figure out if this was a Catholic university, why were they interested in having a law school. There was, of course, then the College for Women and the College for Men, and the school of theology was attached to the law school and the College for Men. The law school was pretty independent, got to do what they wanted to do. They were kind of the goose that provided the golden egg, I think. I've heard that from other sources.

RL: Did you have any concern? I mean, it was a very new enterprise. Did you have any concern about joining on?

ST: I probably wouldn't have if my husband hadn't wanted to come as much as he did. I would have stuck around the Midwest. I think eventually I would have gotten on the faculty at Ohio State, but I don't know [chuckle]. They didn't seem to be prejudiced against women on the faculty. There was a woman who worked in the legal clinic when I was a student. She was a lawyer, and then there was a lawyer who was an assistant librarian, but there were no teachers. But I don't think it was too long after that that they did hire women teachers.

RL: You felt that the atmosphere there was more open to women. They didn't really consider that an issue in the law school. How did that compare with your welcome or your beginning here?

ST: I didn't feel that the students didn't like me as a teacher because I was a woman. I didn't feel that at all. The faculty was very nice. I felt no prejudice from either of those sources.

RL: What was your visit like? I've heard that Dean Sinclitico was kind of a hale fellow well met. Did he show you a good time in San Diego?

ST: Oh, yes, he knew all the best eating places in town. We were very well treated. Right away, he took us to lunch when he picked us up at the airport. It was like I said a kind of a weekend trip just to see what it was like.

RL: Was there an interview as we think of it now, meeting with different groups and that kind of thing?

ST: No, the offer was made before we ever came out here. It was only those people that were in Chicago, which would be Dick Kelly and Joe Brock and Joe Sinclitico, as I recall. They might have remembered Bill more, because he and Joe Brock were from the same part of Iowa, but there was no interview. That was it.

RL: They were trying to sell you on coming to the school at that point.

ST: Right. They were in the process of getting the AA LS approval at that point, as you probably know.

RL: So you visited, and you went home and discussed it, and you came back soon thereafter?

ST: Well, this was in the middle of the winter, of course. It was January, and we were both teaching. I was at the law school in this job I told you about, and my husband was teaching in the business law department. We moved out here in July. The Kellys were renting a home, and they had purchased another home, so we were able to move into the same house as they had rented, so we didn't have to look for some place. The moving van came, and then we spent our weekends looking for a house.

The place to have settled would have been Point Loma in terms of nearness to the university. The way real estate has caught up it would have been the place to go [laughter], but we felt we had to have more land. You know, that's the way it is in Ohio. Well, we ended up going further east. Finally, we got past College Avenue, and strange as it may be, Frank Engfelt's father showed us the house we purchased. He left another real estate company and

went off on his own, and I think we were his first closing on his own. So he found the house that we bought in La Mesa.

RL: So Frank Engfelt's father was your real estate agent?

ST: That's right. We were very good friends socially with the Engfelts because by this time ...

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TAPE 1a: SIDE B

RL: The Engfelts' daughter had just been born.

ST: Yes, that fall, I believe, because I think the first time I met Marci, she was pregnant. So they had a baby, and then it was just easier for us to go to their house, which wasn't that far away, so we would go over there often on Sunday evenings and have pizza—Marci's a wonderful cook—and play board games.

RL: Nowadays, when we try to lure faculty or employees in general to southern California, of course we face a big cost of living hurdle and a big sticker shock when people come from, let's say, the Midwest. Was it not as different then as it is now?

ST: Right, it wasn't as different then as it is now. We had built up what was then a considerable equity—it doesn't sound like much today—in the house that we had in Ohio, and so that was our down payment. That was there to use to buy a house. The only thing was that in the house, which was much smaller, in Ohio we had a basement that was unfinished under the whole thing, so that in terms of square feet, the house in California didn't have any more square feet than the house in Ohio, except the house in Ohio had half above ground and half of it below.

Of course, we had a lot of land. Well, it was almost half an acre, lots of fruit trees. It had been owned by a couple who bought it new, and I think there was a slump in the aircraft industry about that time, and that probably made for more reasonable costs. We were looking in the thirty-five thousand-dollar price range [chuckle]. We didn't get shown a lot in La Jolla; never

found anything we liked really in Point Loma. We had a nice real estate agent in Point Loma, and we would go out every couple of weeks with him, but that's just the way it worked out.

RL: But that's a lot of land for southern California, half an acre.

ST: Yes, it is. These were custom built houses, and they were in now what is probably called Rancho San Diego. It was lot of land, a lot of weeds to pull, a lot of ice plant to plant, a lot of ivy to plant.

RL: Yes, but vegetation is very different out here as well.

So at the law school, what did you start out teaching when you first came here?

ST: Basically, the federal tax courses, Federal Income Tax, a required one, and Federal Estate and Gift Tax—I don't remember exactly what year I taught what—Corporate Tax, which is now probably three or more separate courses, and eventually Estate Planning. Those were the courses I taught until about nineteen eighty-two, and then I started teaching what's called Trusts and Estates. It's a year-long course of three hours each semester, and that includes trusts, wills, community property, and future interests.

RL: Was it required at that time or an elective, do you remember?

ST: I think it was required. I've forgotten what it was when I taught it. I know Tax was required, but I don't remember about T and E.

I think I served on every faculty committee of the law school except the Honor Court, and that was by lottery. I don't know how it is now, but that's how it was. I served on the committee when it was decreed that the College for Men and Women would be one undergraduate college, and the law school had to make some changes to fit into that arrangement.

Another interesting thing was that we were all expected to teach in the evening division at least three hours per week both semesters, and I did that from sixty-five to nineteen eighty. Once, I know that people will find this unbelievable, but I had a Friday night class of Basic

Income Tax, which was three hours long! Fortunately, I had been through the material, or I worked it out so I had been through the material the week before, so I knew how much ground I had to cover. Can you imagine students today going to class for three hours on a Friday night?

RL: They clear out of the library. The library is much less crowded on Friday.

ST: All day Friday!

RL: Yes, exactly. That's amazing, but a nice thing about your story is that you got to teach what you were prepared to teach whereas some people that I've spoken to were just put into a slot that needed filling and had to more or less learn the subject on their feet.

ST: Well, you see, that was my background, accounting and tax, and they needed it, so what I had to offer was what they needed. And they also needed a commercial law teacher, and that's what Bill Velman taught.

RL: So that was perfect that you were both able to do that.

Now, you hadn't met any of the faculty that you enumerated until you went to Chicago, is that correct? There was no one that you knew in advance.

ST: That's right.

RL: I ask because there seems to have been a whole contingency, most of whom pre-dated you, who went through the JAG school in Charlottesville, Virginia—General Hickman and Frank Engfelt and others that I have read about. But you really came brand new.

ST: Cold.

RL: Cold. It sounds like it wasn't difficult though to ...

ST: No, everybody was very nice, even Dick Kelly who said, “Women don’t belong in law school.” When I taught Trusts for the first time, he gave me his Trusts notes. There was no problem with faculty. It was very enjoyable. The faculty was so small oftentimes we would all go to lunch together, often in Old Town. At some point, I don’t remember when, there was a faculty dining room that was available in the building next door. I think there was an outdoor amphitheater where Guadalupe Hall is now.

RL: I’ve heard that.

ST: I think you had to cross over that area, then there was a faculty dining room there. I think there was a bookstore in there as well. We were a pretty congenial group, I thought.

RL: You mentioned John Winters who came when you did. Of course, I never had the opportunity to meet Professor Winters. What can you tell me about him?

ST: His office was where Doris Alspaugh’s is, and my office was, I think, if Ed Ursin has the same office, in that little alcove there.

RL: I’m not sure where they all are now.

ST: Anyway, that used to be a classroom when we first saw the law school, and they put up a wall, and so Bill Velman had the office on one side, and I had the office on the other side. Then, I eventually moved into the office right across from where Doris’s office is. That used to be Father Geimer’s office. Father Geimer was the librarian.

What was your question?

RL: I was asking about John Winters.

ST: Okay, John was in the office where Doris is now, right across. He’d stop in and chat. I forgot how many children they had when they moved here, but they had several more. Of course,

his wife is Sister Furay's sister. Unfortunately, you know what happened to John. He was really a nice man.

The other person that I was really fond of was Joe Ciesczelski, really fond of him. He was the librarian. Well, there was Sue Millar before Joe and then Joe Ciesczelski. Both of Joe and John died within a short time of the time they became ill.

RL: Were their deaths close to one another?

ST: No, John Winters died first, I believe, and then Joe Ciesczelski after that. Joe Ciesczelski had something that was called equine encephalitis.

RL: Yes, I think from a horse fly or something like that.

ST: Well, I don't know. It just happened so fast. He would stop in the office. Actually, I would call him often because there were some things that came up in Community Property that were also crossovers in Family Law, which he taught. He was helpful in answering some of those questions. And he was just a fun person to talk to.

RL: I've heard that he was a nice guy.

ST: Yes, I really liked him a lot.

RL: I was, as I told you before we started, looking through some of the old Woolsacks and trying to put together—it seemed that when he came, he taught mostly in the legal bibliography area ...

ST: Probably so.

RL: ... and worked in the library, and then, after he left working in the library, did he branch out and teach Community Property?

ST: He taught what was called Family Law, and I really don't remember what other courses Joe taught.

RL: But he was a full tenured faculty member.

ST: Yes—Oh, I'm pretty sure he was.

RL: I think so too. You mentioned that the other person that was hired at the time that you were hired, Santa-Pinter, only remained briefly, and you didn't get to know him all that well.

ST: Correct.

RL: Another I guess first for the law school, though this is certainly a tradition that they've carried on was that you were the first teaching married couple to come to the law school. Did that cause any kind of a stir?

ST: Not that I'm aware of [laughter].

RL: I counted the other day in a faculty colloquium, and there were four couples in the room who are both on our faculty now.

For the two of you, it was a real coup to be able to teach at the same place. That's always a difficulty, two-income, two-professional family.

ST: Well, Bill never attended any of my classes, and I never attended any of his. Even when I was in law school, it was like "Go look it up." I'd ask him something, you know.

Sometimes, we would have different nights, and we might not be home all week at the same time, which meant I didn't have to cook, which was great!

RL: Because that was still considered to be the wife's job, even though both were working just as hard, isn't that correct?

ST: Yes, true.

RL: You mentioned that Joe Sinclitico was the dean when you came. What kind of a relationship did he have with the faculty?

ST: I thought it was very good. I mean, Frank and he were very close. His wife was a delight. His kids were nice. They lived over in, I can't remember exactly. I want to say the Talmadge area. He had a nice family, and he was always battling his weight problems, up and down, but he was nice.

RL: What was he like in terms of someone that was a manager and building this new law school?

ST: I think he really enjoyed doing that. I think that was a challenge to him to do that. He was always putting up walls and changing things around. A couple of times, he didn't get the right approval, and the wall came down. Frank can tell you more about that than I can. I think he enjoyed doing that, because I think after he left here, he more or less started another law school and was the foundation builder for it.

He was very supportive too. He sat in on a class, you know, the one I was teaching, and he was very supportive.

RL: You talked about in your own case having served on so many faculty committees—Were there many back then?

ST: I have to stop and think about that. Bill and I were both advisors to the law review, which was just getting off the ground, because we had both been law review. Bill eventually decided he didn't want to do that any more after several years, and that's when Darrell became a law review

advisor, so it was Darrell and I. That took an awful lot of time, and I don't remember my service on other committees. It must not have been much [laughter].

RL: Not as taxing.

ST: No, the faculty was so small. I think the dean probably made most of the decisions. Of course, you don't go right in as being tenured either. That takes a little time.

RL: How was that process for you?

ST: Well, it was kind of painless back then. It really was have you been doing a good job teaching. They didn't go with a yellow marker through everything you had written or not written [laughter]. It was more or less based upon your teaching evaluation.

RL: Was the decision made by a faculty committee?

ST: It was made by the tenured faculty, of which there were not that many.

RL: Less than half a dozen.

ST: Yes.

Two years after we came, I think the next two people that were hired were Darrell Bratton and Bert Lazerow. I think it took three years to get tenured basically.

RL: I read some names that I hadn't heard before. One was, was it Bill Wang?

ST: Yes, I think they pronounced it "wong."

RL: But it was spelled with an "a."

ST: I think. I could be wrong.

RL: Was he there quite that early?

ST: No, he came later. I don't know—you'd have to look that up.

RL: Did you have any impressions of him?

ST: Oh, he was fun. He would always put out these little memorandums as to how to save money, like buy as much toilet paper as your attic can hold—that will go up in price, and it won't spoil—things like this. He was always giving us little financial tidbits.

RL: Did he teach in the finance area?

ST: I can't remember what he taught. He must have taught Corporations and related courses.

RL: Once Dean Sinclitico left, the law school really had its first dean search committee, and the result of that was that Don Weckstein was chosen as dean. What do you remember about that whole process?

ST: I don't remember a whole lot about it, to tell you the truth, except when he was interviewed, I thought, "He will wear well."

He just had that kind of personality, and I thought he seemed like a decent person.

One funny thing about Dick Kelly—I don't remember if it was the dean search or the faculty search, but the Kellys and Bill and I took somebody, it might have been a dean candidate—it wasn't Don Weckstein—out to dinner. Dick Kelly had the credit card for the law school. Dick didn't believe in tipping, not even when he had the law school credit card [laughter]. He was a character. I really missed them when they moved to Oregon.

I made a few notes here. Do you want to proceed with your questions, or did you want me to run through these?

RL: You go right ahead.

ST: I'll rip through these.

RL: That's great. I may miss something that I don't know anything about.

ST: All right. These are just what I wrote down as quick memories:

The nuns wore complete habits when I came out here—hair covered, long skirts. The skirts kept getting shorter and shorter and the head coverings smaller. Now, of course, unless you see a crucifix, you can't tell a nun from anybody else. I was teased that my skirts were longer than the nuns'.

Bishop Furey, no relation to Sister Furay, but he used to come to the law school faculty parties, and he was nice. He was fun.

We used to go to the student functions until the music got so loud that you couldn't have a conversation with another faculty member.

Father Geimer was the librarian, and he was a nice person. He left to be a pastor at Cathedral City and became pretty well acquainted with the Sinatras, as I understand. Maybe you've heard that before.

The library, the offices, the classrooms were all in More Hall, everything.

RL: Was the parking lot, what is now the parking lot, was that a field?

ST: It was an open cement space, and the parking for the faculty was beside the building with our names in front of it. The spaces had our names on them. So we always had a space. Parking was not a problem then.

RL: And it was free?

ST: Yes [laughter]. Times have really changed, haven't they?

Exams were mimeographed.

RL: In purple?

ST: In black. I had a secretary who didn't like to work with old mimeographs in case I wanted to use a portion of one rather than type the whole thing, so I put those in my own typewriter and did it.

Before the classrooms existed on the lowest level, there was one large room, and exams were given there. Tables were set up. There was also a small snack bar down there called "the Writs." You've heard of that probably.

When we first came out here, all the students—well, most of them were men, so they wore jackets and ties. There were very few women. Since I had a Saturday morning Accounting class, one of the students asked me if it was okay not to wear a coat and tie on Saturday, and I said, "Well, of course, that's fine with me."

I mean, Ohio State didn't require a dress code, you know [laughter].

And then, of course, we went through the hippie era. The students looked generally awful, the boys with long hair. I had one girl, I remember, who wore what I would call a baby doll top, and one guy had his graduation picture taken without a shirt. We had the barefoot faculty meeting, which you may have heard about.

RL: No, I've only heard allusions to that. Would you tell me about that?

ST: Well, I can't tell you very much about it, but it was should we let students in that don't have shoes on? Should we actually keep them out of ...

RL: ... the classroom.

ST: Yes, stop them at the front door. Well, how are you going to do that?

RL: [laughter] Put up a sign that says "No shoes, no service?"

ST: Exactly—no shoes, no service. That never went anywhere. Then, we had a few dogs that came with their masters to the classroom. Generally, the student body cleaned up by graduation time when the parents appeared. They looked quite different.

And the commencement—well, that was in several places. In the area where Guadalupe Hall now stands, we had commencement there once, and we had it downtown in the Civic Center jointly with the undergraduate school once or twice. We had it out there on the point, where something is now built, I think.

RL: Oh, where the Joan Kroc Center is?

ST: Yes, it was out there, and it was a drizzly day. You would be looking off in the direction of the downtown area.

RL: Okay, it might have been there. There was a track there, there was a walking track there when I came in the nineties. There was no Peace and Justice Center there.

ST: Yes, that might have been where it was. It must not have been very satisfactory because that was the only time it was there.

Now, the other thing that was kind of interesting was that there were no posters about public speakers. I mean, there was no politics allowed. Ronald Reagan was running for governor, and one of my faculty friends discovered that he was speaking at the College for Men, so he and I slipped over and heard him speak. No politics in those days.

RL: So you just heard about that by word of mouth.

ST: Yes, from my other Republican friend.

I think that's the extent of things that I was trying to remember maybe that other people hadn't.

RL: Well, I think that your perspective is unique, first of all, I think, because of the fact that whether or not you saw yourself that way, you were a pioneering woman. You were the first female law professor, and that has a lot of implications, and also, I think, because of your business background. From what I've learned so far, that was something ...

ST: And they were just as prejudiced in accounting as the lawyers were [laughter].

RL: Let's just go back and talk a little bit about Don Weckstein as a person. I was not able, of course, to interview Don before his untimely death, and I just wondered what you remembered about him as a person that you'd like to share.

ST: Well, I didn't really know him that well. I knew his first wife. She was very nice, and she was very artistic. Sheila was her name. I guess I knew her better than I knew him. That's about all I can say. I just don't have much to share with you about Don.

RL: How would you say the law school changed under his administration?

ST: Well, he had some ideas that he quickly put into practice, the tax program being one. I remember a committee meeting, probably Bert and I and who else was there, but Don was there with a yellow pad, "Well, we take in this much income, and we have this much expense."

Lo and behold we had a graduate tax program with myself and a downtown lawyer. It just kind of grew.

RL: Would that have been our first LLM course?

ST: Right.

RL: I imagine that, or I shouldn't imagine how you felt. How did you feel about having that?

ST: Well, the Estate and Gift Tax was basically what I taught in that program for which they got credit, because I think some of the practitioners really did want to teach, the downtown people, so they didn't have much trouble getting people to teach that were lawyers downtown. I remember I was in my office on a summer day, and Bert came in and said, "How would you like to be director of the tax program?"

And I said I wouldn't.

"Oh, it won't be much work."

I said, "No, no, no—No, thank you very much for asking but no thank you."

So I immediately went home and called Ginny Shue and said, "You're probably going to get asked. Be prepared."

She took it.

CONVERSATIONS IN LEGAL EDUCATION:

ORAL HISTORIES OF THE FIRST HALF-CENTURY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO SCHOOL OF LAW

Narrator: Sarah Smith Velman Tintor

Interviewer: Ruth Levor

Recorder: Ruth Levor

Date: October 25, 2005

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TAPE 1b: SIDE A

RL: When you first started teaching here at USD, what were the classrooms like?

ST: There were two large street level classrooms. They were just flat classrooms on both sides. They had like a podium. Now, most of that's been made into office space, except there was a classroom, I believe, on the same side my old office was. That's probably still there.

RL: Were there any small classrooms on the higher floors?

ST: I don't think so. I know there was one on the lowest level, because I taught some night classes down there. As a matter of fact, there might have been two on the lowest level.

RL: I found some pictures where the professor was on a small platform with a wrought iron rail around. Was that like that at the time?

ST: That's where you were raised up a little bit above the level of the students that all were on the same level. They were good sized classrooms, and then they made offices out of them. The building that's the Legal Research Center now, the priests lived there, you know. During baseball season, Father Geimer would have the World Series on, and so as one could, one stopped in to watch that.

RL: In his apartment?

ST: Yes.

RL: The student body was small at that time. At that time, did the building feel adequate for the needs of the law school, or was it already starting to be too small?

ST: No, I thought it was adequate. I mean, I didn't feel that anybody was cramped or that people didn't get to take the courses they wanted because they ran out of space. It seemed to be roomy enough.

RL: What size would a tax class be at that time? How many students would you have at one time?

ST: Well, I'm trying to think. How many students were there in the day class, in a day class at that time?

RL: I don't know—about fifty maybe?

ST: No, I think that the law school had between four and five hundred students, a hundred in the evening division, so there might have been ..., I don't know.

RL: That's pretty amazing that that size faculty could meet the needs of that many students.

ST: I think that was about right. You would have to check the records on that, because Tax was a required course, so however many students made it to the second year were the students I had.

RL: It was required in the second year?

ST: Yes.

RL: You talked about that philosophy when you were a student of a third of you will not be here at the end of the year. Was there any such philosophy here?

ST: No.

RL: I wouldn't think that a small school could afford to have a philosophy like that.

ST: No, they didn't, and the difference between, just to compare, a couple of state schools, Ohio State had a big flunk-out rate deliberately, the cream of the crop, while Michigan only had about a six percent flunk-out rate, because they didn't let them in in the first place. So that difference in the educational philosophy was kind of like you got in to Ohio State, but you couldn't get in to Michigan. Wait a minute.

RL: Well, there's always that rivalry between Ohio State and Michigan.

ST: Oh, yes, you know, my loyalties are with Ohio State even though I got my undergraduate degree from Michigan.

RL: This would have been your first experience with a private Catholic educational institution. Were there some differences because of that that you were aware of?

ST: None that I felt.

RL: No? Other than that there were priests' apartments.

ST: Oh, yes, but there were crucifixes on the wall. And holy days were observed then. No, I didn't feel any—I mean, how differently can you teach Tax?

RL: Did you have a sense that most of your students were fresh out of college, or did you have G.I. Bill people or older people?

ST: Well, I never taught a first-year class. My students were always second-year or third-year, because I didn't teach the first-year courses, and then, the night division was a wholly different group of people, because these were working people, or they were Navy people, I mean working Navy people, so you had an older group of people in the night class—a couple of pro football players. That was a different group of people.

RL: Did you see any difference in the performance of the two groups between the day and the evening in terms of dealing with the materials and their study habits and the like?

ST: I can't recall that I did.

RL: How well prepared did you find the students to be to handle the subject matter? Was it harder for them than you expected or easier?

ST: I know I did not say, "Oh, you're not prepared," and really grind them into the ground. There were classes that I'd had—well, he wasn't one of my favorite law professors, but if you weren't prepared, you might as well close your book and leave the room, because you'd be asked to. I kind of started off tough in the sense that I expect you to be here on time; I expect you not to talk to your neighbor during class; lay down a few rules like that. You know, you can always ease up on that, but then, we got to that era where some on the faculty was everybody's friend. That didn't go over too well.

RL: Was that more in the seventies, do you think?

ST: Yes.

RL: As the hair got longer?

ST: Yes, and some of these students you just had to hope they didn't raise their hand [laughter]. You didn't know quite how to respond to some questions. This may want to be deleted, what I'm about to say, but I had one student once; I remember he raised hand and he said, "Well, the taxpayer really got screwed in that case, didn't he?"

What do you do? Try to change the subject and move on.

RL: But it sounds like you didn't change your style over time.

ST: Probably a little ..., I still required attendance. A lot of people didn't, but I still did. You're supposed to, you know; that's in the AA LS rules. As those new rooms went up upstairs, it was so hard to take attendance, because it was a different place, and they would all sit at the top because it was easier to get in, and so each time I passed around a sheet, and they checked off or signed in whether they were there or not. So many absences and they were going to have to be asked to leave the class. Well, I never did kick anybody out of class.

RL: In teaching Tax, which I think is different than teaching Contracts or Torts, did you use the Socratic method?

ST: Well, I tried to. I would say I was not as Socratic as a lot of people were. It's the way you learn in law school so it kind of carries over. I may have done more lecturing than some other people, but sometimes you just had to get over the ground.

RL: In Tax, as I recall, there are all kinds of almost funny stories. I can't remember any of them, but I wondered whether you had any favorite cases or any that stick with you that were bizarre.

ST: I don't recall that any set me on the floor laughing [laughter], I really don't. The only funny thing that happened once in class was the way that you compute what's ultimately going to be taxed as a capital gain. Do you remember that?

RL: Yes.

ST: You net your long term capital gains and short term capital losses, and then you do the same with the short term gains and losses, and then the student went through it, and out of my mouth came, “But first you take your shorts off.”

All I could do was turn my back and just ... Oh, the class howled. They got a kick out of it. That’s the only funny thing that I can really remember that happened.

RL: What kind of exams did you give in Tax? Did you give mostly essay or short answer?

ST: I started out giving a combination. In other words, I would give them an objective exam, and then, when they finished that, they turned that in, and they got an essay question or two.

I pre-numbered the exams. I was a real Gestapo about my exams. They had a couple of incidents of maybe, maybe not, people breaking in where the exams were stored. So they were pre-numbered; I pre-numbered them.

Then, I did my own study on how well did they do on the essay and how well did they do on the objective, and I found out it was about the same. If they did well on one, they did well on the other; if they did poorly on one, they did poorly on the other part. Grant Morris, I don’t know how he ended up feeling about it, but he was anti-objective questions. When I went to law school, we had a lot of objective questions. My final in Contracts was twenty-eight objective questions, on which a whole year of credit rested.

Anyway, I then went to a total objective exam. I had to hand grade these, you know, circle the correct answer or more than one answer and so forth. You know, you’d flip a page and flip a page and so on and so forth. Finally, the Scantrons came along, and so that made it much easier to do. You had to readjust your questions. From what I hear, they haven’t upgraded those Scantrons so that you can put different weight on different questions or have one or more answers right or wrong unless you’re willing to hand grade them. So I would say that I ended up doing mostly objective exams, because I felt that the results were ...

RL: ... equivalent.

ST: Yes, and not out of line with what I would have given and certainly a lot easier to grade.

RL: Explain what you meant when you talked about pre-numbering the exams.

ST: Every student got a different number every semester, and you got a list of those numbers, and then, those were grade lists. Once you determined the grade for that number, you put it on the sheet, so you knew you had your numbers. In order to know if everybody had shown up for the exams, I pre-numbered the exams, and that way I could keep track of them. If number two fourteen didn't come in, where was it at the end? They knew they had to turn them in. There were some possibilities that people might walk off with some exams. You know, things happen.

Also, after the exam started, then I was always there during the exams, and I would go to whoever in the office was there, Verna or whoever was around, and say, "Okay, has this person dropped the class? Is this person scheduled for a makeup? Is this person just not here?"

So that's what I mean by controlling the exams.

RL: And of course, giving objective exams, you would not have put them on file then in the library.

ST: Right, because you can't ...

RL: How many different ways can you ask the same question over the years?

ST: Yes, I mean you change it every year, but you don't begin with Genesis, you know.

RL: That's a good way of putting it.

Over the years, did you change your approach to the students, to the whole classroom in any way?

ST: That's hard for me to judge whether I did or whether I didn't. I spent as much time as was necessary with the students. What I mean is if they wanted to follow me down to my office after class—By the way, I liked late classes; I liked classes beginning at ten or later, and I'd rather have a night class than an eight o'clock class—but if they wanted to come down to my office, assuming I didn't have something I had to do, a doctor's appointment or a faculty meeting or a committee meeting or something, I was willing to sit there and talk to them about class or whatever.

I think this may not have worked to my betterment as far as publishing was concerned, because I spent a lot of time with students. You don't get credit for that.

RL: Only in the hearts of the students, who tend to think that that's more important. Did you teach Tax mainly out of case books?

ST: Yes, always.

RL: Did you find the students to be, well, let me put it this way, how serious did you find them to be about their studies? You know, there's always a reputation that you're in southern California, there are other things that are more important than studies. Did you see that?

ST: Oh, I think that was all over the board. I don't know if they were any different than anybody else because of the fact they were in southern California. They were paying big time tuition.

RL: Did you find them to be very competitive among themselves, or did that manifest itself to you?

ST: It didn't manifest itself to me, no.

RL: Were you always required to use a grading curve?

ST: Well, not always, but there were people that graded very low, and there were people that tended to grade high, so the faculty came up with this grading curve, and you know, you had to fit in that or explain why, and it was pretty hard when you had a small class to follow that. You could write a memo and say, you know, but the deans didn't like those memos. It wasn't always there, but once it was there, you pretty much had to stick to it.

RL: You talked about when you first started teaching, most of the students were men, and you talked about the coat-and-ties rule, which gradually seemed to go by the boards as the times changed. As more and more women came in, can you describe that dynamic? Were you aware of that change? Was there much talk about that?

ST: I have a couple of old Woolsacks here that talked about fourteen percent at some point. I wasn't really, I guess, I don't know, it just happened kind of gradually. There were a few more and a few more. There was a group of kids that were on the law review that were really friendly. They were friendly with each other, and they were fun, Judy Keep and the other gal, Sherry, I can't think of her name. She was also a judge. They were good friends, and Pete Nuñez was the editor. No, it was just kind of a non-event. They just were there.