

WPCNR LEGACIES OF WHITE PLAINS. *From Center for Judicial Accountability. December 7, 2006:* Doris L. Sassower, of White Plains, NY, a leading feminist lawyer who, at 35, was the youngest President of the New York Women's Bar Association, is profiled in the just-published book, [Feminists Who Changed America, 1963-1975](#). "The women's movement was, apart from the civil rights upheaval, the major social revolution of the 20th century," says Sassower.

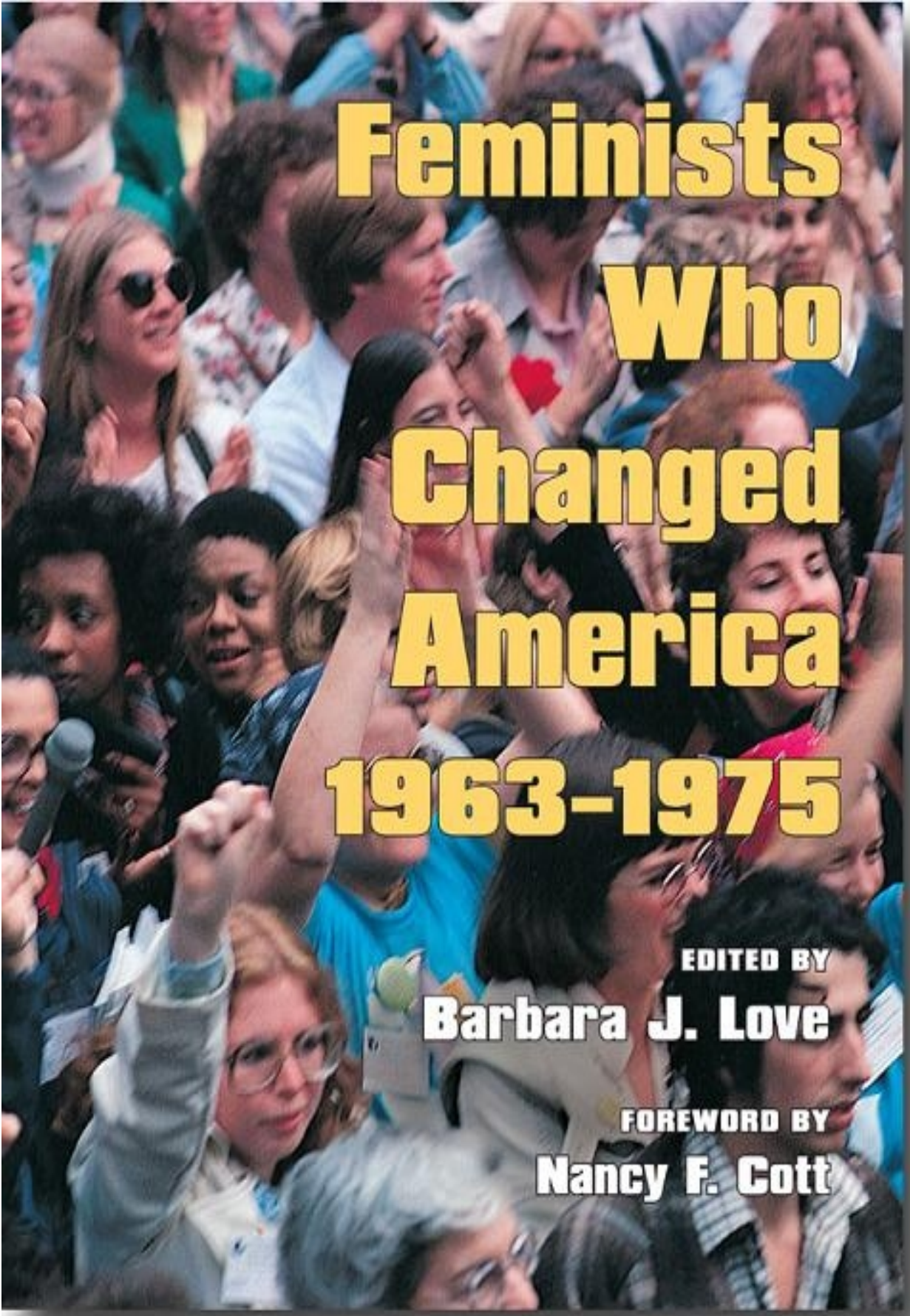


White Plains' Doris Sassower, right, with the feminist icon, Gloria Steinem at a reception at Columbia University, celebrating the publication of [Feminists Who Changed America](#). *Photo, Courtesy Center for Judicial Accountability.*

The book, edited by Barbara J. Love, was released on November 13. Publication was celebrated with an all-day gala event at Columbia University and Barnard College in NYC, sponsored by the Veteran Feminists of America. The program included a symposium on the women's movement at Columbia Faculty House, followed by a reception hosted by Barnard President, Dr. Judith Shapiro, and dinner honoring Sassower and feminists such as Gloria Steinem.

Sassower battled her own profession for years, and galvanized bar leaders into action that won greater equality between the sexes in and outside the legal profession. In 1993, she co-founded the Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc., a national, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, based in White Plains, NY, which she describes as "documenting the corruption of our federal, state, and local judicial nominating processes for appointment, as well as for election, and of all remedies for redress of judicial abuse and other misconduct." Find out more at www.judgewatch.org

Her articles, speeches, and legal cases challenging sexism, as well as other papers, are archived at the Schlesinger Library of Harvard University.



**Feminists
Who
Changed
America
1963-1975**

EDITED BY
Barbara J. Love

FOREWORD BY
Nancy F. Cott

Sassower, Doris L. (1932 -) It was her "second-class citizen" experience at NYU Law School as one of six women in the 1955 class that turned Sassower into a future leader of the women's movement. By 1968, at age 35, Sassower was elected president of the New York Women's Bar Association. Her 1968 *Trial Magazine* article, "What's Wrong with Women Lawyers?" concluded that nothing whatever was wrong with women lawyers but the discrimination against them in the legal profession, reflecting the societal sexism of the time. In February 1969, Sassower presented these "radical" views to the National Conference of Bar Presidents, the first woman ever invited to do so. In that same year, four years prior to the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Roe v. Wade*, Sassower led the New York Women's Bar Association to become the first bar association to endorse repeal of New York's abortion law. In April 1970, Sassower co-convened a national conference on Breaking Down the Barriers in the Professions. More than 500 professional and academic women from across the country and abroad listened to documented reports on the unequal status of women in America. This, she says, led to the formation of the Professional Women's Caucus, the first respected professional support for what became known as the women's movement. In 1971, as head of PWC's legal arm, Sassower filed a class action complaint against every American law school receiving federal funds, based on their identified discrimination against women. Sassower brought a test case under NYC's human rights law and made new law for women by expanding city and state jurisdiction to include financial institutions and credit houses under the rubric "public accommodations." In 1972, she became the first woman practitioner nominated at a judicial convention for the New York Court of Appeals. She also became the first woman named to the New York State Bar Association's judiciary committee, serving for eight years. Sassower's advocacy skills transformed the world for women and men, particularly in family law. By the early 1970s, she had become known as "the mother of joint custody," also arguing-well before the U.S. Supreme Court so ruled that statutory denial of alimony to men was unconstitutional sex-stereotyping. In 1977, Harvard Law School hung her portrait as part of its 25th anniversary celebration of its admission of women. Her pioneering efforts have been recognized nationally. In 1981, NY State NOW honored her with a Special Award for "outstanding achievements on behalf of women and children in the area of family law." Since her retirement from law practice, Sassower has worked, *pro bono*, as co-founder and director of the Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. In 1997, she won a national Giraffe Award, given to those who "stick their necks out for the Common Good." In addition to her J.D. from NYU Law School (1955), Sassower holds a BA from Brooklyn College (1954). She has three children. Archives: Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Cambridge, MA. (ABS)

Martindale-Hubbell Law Directory New York

One Hundred and Twentieth Annual Edition (1989)

DORIS L. SASSOWER, P.C. "AV" (Highest Rating)

DORIS L. SASSOWER, born New York, N.Y., September 25, 1932; admitted to bar, 1955, New York; 1961, U.S. Supreme Court, U.S. Court of Claims, U.S. Court of Military Appeals and U.S. Court of International Trade. *Education*: Brooklyn College (B.A. *summa cum laude*, 1954); New York University (J.D., *cum laude*, 1955). *Phi Beta Kappa*, Florence Allen Scholar. Law Assistant: U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of New York, 1954-1955; Chief Justice Arthur T. Vanderbilt, Supreme Court of New Jersey, 1956-1957. President, Phi Beta Kappa Alumnae of New York, 1970-71. President, New York Women's Bar Association, 1968-69. President, Lawyers' Group of Brooklyn College Alumni Association, 1963-65. Recipient: Distinguished Woman Award, Northwood Institute, Midland Michigan, 1976. Special Award "for outstanding achievements on behalf of women and children," National Organization for Women -- NYS, 1981; New York Women's Sports Association Award "as champion of equal rights," 1981. Distinguished Alumna Award, Brooklyn College, 1973. Named Outstanding Young Woman of America, State of New York, 1969. Nominated as candidate for New York Court of Appeals, 1972. Columnist: ("Feminism and the Law") and Member, Editorial Board, *Woman's Life Magazine*, 1981. Author: Book Review, *Separation Agreements and Marital Contracts*, *Trial Magazine*, October 1987; *Support Handbook*, *ABA Journal*, October, 1986; Anatomy of a Settlement Agreement Divorce Law Education Institute 1982 "Climax of a Custody Case," *Litigation*, Summer, 1982; "Finding a Divorce Lawyer you can Trust," *Scarsdale Inquirer*, May 20, 1982. "Is This Any Way to Run An Election?" *American Bar Association Journal*, August, 1980; "The Disposable Parent: The Case for Joint Custody," *Trial Magazine*, April, 1980. "Marriages in Turmoil: The Lawyer as Doctor," *Journal of Psychiatry and Law*, Fall, 1979. "Custody's Last Stand," *Trial Magazine*, September, 1979; "Sex Discrimination -- How to Know It When You See It," *American Bar Association Section of Individual Rights and Responsibilities Newsletter*, Summer, 1976; "Sex Discrimination and the Law," *NY Women's Week*, November 8, 1976; "Women, Power, and the Law," *American Bar Association Journal*, May, 1976; "The Chief Justice Wore a Red Dress," *Woman in the Year 2000*, Arbor House, 1974; "Women and the Judiciary: Undoing the Law of the Creator," *Judicature*, February, 1974; "Prostitution Review," *Juris Doctor*, February, 1974; "No Fault' Divorce and Women's Property Rights," *New York State Bar Journal*, November, 1973; "Marital Bliss: Till Divorce Do Us Part," *Juris Doctor*, April, 1973; "Women's Rights in Higher Education," *Current*, November, 1972; "Women and the Law: The Unfinished Revolution," *Human Rights*, Fall, 1972; "Matrimonial Law Reform: Equal Property Rights for Women," *New York State Bar Journal*, October, 1972, "Judicial Selection Panels: An Exercise in Futility?," *New York Law Journal*, October 22, 1971; "Women in the Law: The Second Hundred Years," *American Bar Association Journal*, April, 1971; "The Role of Lawyers in Women's Liberation," *New York Law Journal*, December 30, 1970; "The Legal Rights of Professional Women," *Contemporary Education*, February, 1972; "Women and the Legal Profession," *Student Lawyer Journal*, November, 1970; "Women in the Professions," *Women's Role in Contemporary Society*, 1972; "The Legal Profession and Women's Rights," *Rutgers Law Review*, Fall, 1970; "What's Wrong With Women Lawyers?," *Trial Magazine*, October-November, 1968. Address to: The National Conference of Bar Presidents, *Congressional Record*, Vol. 115, No. 24E 815-6, February 5, 1969; The New York Women's Bar Association, *Congressional Record*, Vol. 114, No. E5267-8, June 11, 1968. Director: New York University Law Alumni Association, 1974; International Institute of Women Studies, 1971; Institute on Women's Wrongs, 1973; Executive Woman, 1973. Co-Organizer, National Conference of Professional and Academic Women, 1970. Founder and Special Consultant, Professional Women's Caucus, 1970 Trustee, Supreme Court Library, White Plains, by appointment of Governor Carey, 1977-1986 (Chair, 1983-1986). Elected Delegate, White House Conference on Small Business, 1986. Member, Panel of Arbitrators, American Arbitration Association. *Member*: The Association of Trial Lawyers of America; The Association of the Bar of the City of New York; Westchester County, New York State (Member: Judicial Selection Committee: Legislative Committee, Family Law Section), Federal and American (ABA Chair, National Conference of Lawyers and Social Workers, 1973-1974; Member, Sections on: Family Law, Individual Rights and Responsibilities; Committee on Rights of Women, 1982; Litigation) Bar Associations; New York State Trial Lawyers Association; American Judicature Society; National Association of Women Lawyers (Official Observer to the U.N., 1969-1970); Consular Law Society; Roscoe Pound-American Trial Lawyers' Foundation; American Association for the International Commission of Jurists; Association of Feminist Consultants; Westchester Association of Women Business Owners; American Womens' Economic Development Corp.; Womens' Forum. Fellow: American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, New York Bar Foundation.