

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Northeast Ohio Legal Services

Personal Experience

O.H. 1485

HAZEL D. BOLLING

Interviewed

by

James B. Callen

on

April 3, 1992

C: This is an interview with Hazel D. Bolling for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on Northeast Ohio Legal Services, by James B. Callen, at 700 Metropolitan Tower, Youngstown, Ohio, on April 3, 1992, at 10:30 a.m.

Hazel, could you tell me a little bit about your background, where you were born, where you went to school?

S: Yes. I was born in a town called Monongahela, Pennsylvania. It is 23 miles south of Pittsburgh. I was reared there in the public school system. I attended Monongahela High School and I graduated from that school. At that time, it was hard to get a job. It was back in 1946 or 1947, and it was hard for black people to get jobs. You had to do other things than what your vocation was until you could get a job. So, what I did was take a Civil Service Test. I passed the test and eventually left Monongahela.

I took a job in Washington, D.C., with the Department of Labor in the Bureau of Labor Standards. I stayed there for about four years, until I got married and returned to Monongahela, Pennsylvania. We lived there for awhile and then I eventually came to Youngstown, Ohio. That is where my husband's people were. Here, I worked for Youngstown State University for a while and it was during the times for reservations. In fact, what we did was just help the students complete their applications. That is what I was doing. I did that for quite a while until I found a job with what we called then, Mahoning County Legal Assistance Association.

C: What year was that, Hazel?

B: Unofficially, the date was May 29 and May 31. I was without pay, but it officially began on June 1, 1967.

C: How did it come about that you got a job at Mahoning County Legal Assistance?

B: When I was going to relocate to Youngstown, Ohio, I had written a letter. Someone advised me to write a letter to the Youngstown Area Community Action Council for a position. They told me that they did not have any positions, but they were about to begin a Legal Service Program, and if I would send my resume to Ernest Lokey, that they would consider my employment. They did consider my employment and they said that several people would be hired. When they checked my resume, they gave me the position of chief secretary and we hired two other secretaries after that.

C: What were your job responsibilities like when you began at Legal Services?

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We had an office with one desk that we shared and two chairs. The old time desk

had a platform that you could pull out. So my boss, who was Attorney K.J. Kavoquis, used the desk. We pulled the arm out and put a typewriter on it and I used that portion and we borrowed two chairs.

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Then we moved to 804. At that time it was called Central Tower Building, which is the very building we are in now because the name has been changed to the Metropolitan Tower Building. It was the old Central Tower Building and we were located on 804. Again, there was only Attorney Kovaquis and I. At the time, we had four investigators and three attorneys. I was the chief secretary. We hired two more secretaries and located them -- one in the South Side branch of Youngstown Area Community Action Council and one also located in the North Side branch of the Youngstown Area Community Action Council. Bertha Robinson, who is now deceased, after working here for more than twenty years, was a secretary at the South Side branch and Artholla Thompson was located in the North Side branch.

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C: What was the attitude, at that time, of other private lawyers in town and of the Bar Association towards Legal Services?

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C: What was the attitude of the community, in general, to Legal Services at that time?

B: Like a breath of fresh air for the poor people. The poor people, they came in droves. They were very happy to have someone, finally, to help them, and the other social agencies were also happy about it. But as I said, the private Bar Association still felt that we would be competing with them. People on the street were happy. They felt that this was a first in the United States, truly trying to help the poor people. People, for the most

part, welcomed Legal Services.

- C: Can you think of any specific incidents or conversations you had either with clients or people in the community that reflected this attitude?
- B: When we spoke with other agencies, they would always express their delight in having us there because they had so many people come to them that they had to turn away because they had no other avenues for them to explore. Then the clients themselves would come in and tell us what a blessing it was to have Legal Services. They said, "We finally have someone who wants to help us." Because at this point, poor people just had no one to help them. They were sort of always on the outside looking in, and at this point when Legal Services came in, they felt that they had someone that was on their side.
- C: Could you describe the kind of cases that the office handled back in the first few years?
- B: Well, some of them are still similar to what we handled today. We had housing matters, and we had domestic problems. At one point, we did handled bankruptcies; they were not as popular in that day as they are today. We handled other administrative problems, consumer problems; well, things of that nature.
- C: Have you noticed a change over the years in the types of problems, the severity of problems that clients experience?
- B: Yes. First of all, there is such a lack of morals today, and you find that people have many more difficult problems than they had before. Before, it was food, clothing, and shelter that they were trying to gain. But today, there is just an attitude of violence in the air and an attitude of disrespect in the air, an attitude of a lack of love and dis-concern for one another. People, in fact, twenty-five years ago, they were poor, but they still wanted to reach out and help their brother. Today, it is a completely different thing, with the drugs and the alcohol and the prostitution. Of course, that has always been with us. The drugs and the alcohol are just sort of killing the people's minds and I do not think there is a solution. Well, society has found no solution, but it is making a much more violent society for us today.
- C: How have you seen that affect the types of problems that Legal Services gets, that you have seen?
- B: That affects us. In the way that the clients come in, it is just a different type of problem. You have people who are on their jobs and they have a drug problem, now you find that employers are making allowances for this and they will ask them to go to a drug program. Sometimes, when you are employed today, they will ask you to take a urine test. This was unheard of before. That is one way that I noticed Jim.

- C: How has your job changed over the years at Legal Services?
- B: Very dramatically, I would say. I was the chief secretary for, I believe it was thirteen, fourteen years, and then they changed the name to an Administrative Secretary. I was secretary to all of the directors. Under the directorship of Bob Clyde, I changed jobs in the middle of the stream there. I was very well versed of the administrative end of Legal Services and all the rules and regulations, and functions. Then I changed to working with the attorneys and it was a welcomed changed because, although I had been working around it for thirteen or fourteen years, I did not have any expertise in that area because of the position that I had. So it had changed. We started an employment team back in 1976 or 1978. I am not certain when, and I began working with Staughton Lynd and the employment team, and the employment team is still a viable part of Legal Services today.
- C: What are some of the most significant changes you have seen since you have worked here?
- B: I have seen so much in my own personal life. I have seen an interesting shift of interest. Almost all of the employees who have been with Legal Services have always been very much dedicated to Legal Services. I do remember that the jobs that I had were always overwhelming. There was just so much work and it just seemed there were so few hours to complete everything. Each time the phone rang it would give you a new problem. In the early years, I used to come to work on Saturdays, I used to come down on Sundays, and I used to take work home to the point where my husband told me, "Do not bring anything else in this house that says Legal Services on it." I was here, this is just where I was. My children told me, "You are married to your job." I reckon I was a workaholic, but there were just so many things to be done and you wanted to have them finished by Monday morning. I did that for a long, long time. On Sunday's you would find me down there. Sunday mornings, or Sunday afternoons, rather. Then I would be the only one there. I had so much comp time at one time, and there was no real light at the end of the tunnel. I just took it and dropped it in the wastepaper basket which was a grave mistake because later on we did get a director who honored your comp time. In the beginning they said, "Keep your comp time." I had kept it for years, but then after I started working with Staughton Lynd, not that my duties were any less, I still had a lot of duties, but it was just of a different nature. Then I noticed all of the attorneys coming down on Saturdays and they would come on Sundays and they would work late. It just reminded me of myself and the interest that I had. I felt that the new attorneys that had come on board had the same interest and they certainly wanted Legal Services to be successful.
- C: What changes have you seen in the way the office operates, in the type of clients you may deal with, and just the office setting that they have compared to what you began with?
- B: Somewhere along the way, the directors and the executive directors and the board

decided that we are a law office. We should look like a law office. Therefore, in 1983, we made a significant change, and we moved from the eighth floor and took over the entire seventh floor. We refurbished this place, we decorated this floor and had an open house for Legal Services. Our quarters now can compete with many of the attorneys of the private bar. This also gives our clients a better feeling about Legal Services. If you walk into somewhere that is not very attractive, you feel that, "I am not going to get very many results with my problem here." But you walk into Legal Services today, we have a very efficiently run office. We have a receptionist who is exceptional, I believe. And I think we have exceptional employees, both support staff and professional. We have a very good working relationship. I think we understand one another. I think we love one another. This is our home away from home, and I feel that we are doing an excellent job here for the poor public in Mahoning and surrounding counties.

- C: How has the management of the office changed, if at all, during the time that you have worked here, in terms of the style of the managers and how employees are treated and so forth?
- B: Dramatically, again, I should say dramatically. We had executive directors in the past who were attorneys, but they were not strong administrators. Many of the problems, the in-house problems, were not resolved at all. They were more or less pushed under the rug. Not saying anything against anyone, it is just that some people are stronger in knowing how to handle problems. Everyone does not have that gift. Many problems could have been resolved, but were not. We have an administrator now, Don Griesman, who is head and shoulders above everyone and he addresses everyone's problems. I observe that each job here at Legal Services is important to him, no matter what the task. Each job is important, and he meets with everyone and talks about your position and he talks about your job performance. He talks about how you are handling your day by day duties and he just gives you the feeling that you are one of us. We have always been together, but never like we are today. We just have a boss who is an administrator and he is also an attorney, and a gentleman.
- C: What can you say about how decisions have been made in the office over the years, in terms of whether the decisions are made by one person or whether they were decisions that were made by more than one person?
- B: Prior to Don Griesman's arrival, they were made by the director, with some input from the board. Now, our executive director has given us all an opportunity to have input with decisions or any problems that arise in Legal Services, and I think it is an excellent idea because it gives everyone the feeling that their opinion is important, too. Decisions are made by NOLS, of course not leaving the board out, but the employees have their input also.
- C: What do you consider some of the most important, significant things that you have been

involved with or the program has been involved with over the time that you have been here?

B: That is a hard question. We have been involved in so many things here. I think that as an overall picture, every position here at Legal Services is important and when you put them all together, that is what makes Legal Services. I have had an opportunity in the earlier days, we used to go out and give speeches to different social organizations and just apprise the public of what Legal Services is all about, because we were comparatively new in the area at that time and we wanted to reach the people. I remember going out and doing things like that because we did not have as many attorneys as we have now, so that was part of my job also. Of course, going to board meetings, that was part of my job also. I think today, we have a better way of reaching the public now. We have been there, by virtue of our longevity, and people know about us now and I think that we were handling a lot of things that we never handled before. We have many more attorneys, so naturally, the duties are spread out over to all the attorneys. We have a lot of attorneys in special fields now and, of course, the longer you are in a special field, the more accurate you become in dispensing knowledge to the public.

C: Was there any one period of time in which you feel that there was particular excitement or special things going on or things that were more memorable to you than other times?

B: Legal Services has always been kind of special and exciting to me because of the newness of it. I love helping people and just the fact that I have had a whole brand new county opened up to me, I was able to help a lot of people. There were several times that we had banquets in honor of what our anniversary date would be, and I remember one time that I handled the entire banquet and one other girl assisted and that was kind of an exciting time because I felt that if you have a banquet, that is publicity and that is going to help people know more about us. Just day by day, just the day to day duties of Legal Services have always been exciting to me. I have been here a long time and there has never been any two days alike. A lot of times, it has been frustrating, but never boring. I have never been bored a day in my life. I might have been disappointed about some things, but I have never been bored. This job has always been a challenge.

C: You said that no two days are alike. Could you describe what a typical day is like for you?

B: A typical day in Legal Services is to come in and have your mind set on what you are going to do and when you leave that day, sometimes you realize that the very first thing on your agenda has never been addressed. That is a typical day at Legal Services. I have often called it the office of interruptions. As soon as the phone rings, your agenda changes.

C: With that in mind, what do you usually do during the day, what activities do you



perform?

- B: I answer phone calls for my bosses. I have three at the moment. I work with the employment team. That is people who have been discharged unjustly from their jobs. I handle all the intakes for each client that calls in. I have a summary of their problem and then I schedule all of the appointments for my bosses. I also act as a referral agent for unemployment compensation cases, social security cases, and worker's comp cases. There is always that walk in, that person that does not call in. They will walk in and I will have to do the same for them depending on what their problem is, either make an appointment or refer them. We have work on our computer and we check the Daily Legal News to see if any of our attorneys have cases that our scheduled in court. Occasionally, we run errands. I run errands for our boss to another attorney's office or to the courts. We have our case reviews where the attorneys meet once a week and discuss their cases that they may have a problem with or just a case that they need to share with the other attorneys. And I did go to operating engine meetings with one of the attorneys for months. That was quite interesting. I will handle most of the mailing for my bosses. There are other on-going routine, you could not call them mundane, but the are routine duties that we have to keep up with, our tickler files, just making certain that our attorneys are apprised of everything that they need to know.
- C: How does the attitude of the private attorneys towards Legal Services today compare to what it was when you started?
- B: I think there is an attitude of friendship now. I feel we have had a lot of private attorney involvement now with Legal Services. I think they probably look on us as an asset because we can help them in many ways. We do have clients that come in here. We have government financial guidelines that we have to follow, and occasionally, in fact, many times, clients come in and they are over our guidelines. We again are acting as a referral agent to these people; we refer them to the Bar Association and that gives some attorney another client.
- C: Hazel, how do you think the attitude of the community clients towards Legal Services today, compares to what it was when you started?
- B: Well, I think it is still good. In the beginning, they were so happy to have Legal Services in existence and I think today, it is the very same. We sent out a survey sheet to each client after their case is closed, in fact I was just going through it. We asked them to give their opinion of Legal Services, and by the attitudes of the people, as far as I can see, the public is still very happy about having Legal Services in Mahoning County.
- C: Can you recall what it was like around here in the late 1970's when the steel mills were closing? Were there any impressions that stand out in your mind?

- B: Yes. There was complete devastation on the hearts and minds of people. The U.S. Steel was almost like apple pie. You do not get rid of apple pie. You just thought the steel mills would be there because they had always been there. The 6:00 news would interview people and they would express their dismay about the steel mills being gone. This was their livelihood. Sometimes there was two and three generations that had been in U.S. Steel and it was just a way of life in this town. The steel mills hired more people than anyone else in Youngstown, Ohio, but after that left, it helped people to realize that this was a reality, that this did close and that nothing is foolproof anymore. I think we know from today not only was it U.S. Steel. So many other cooperations and work places have gone out of existence since. People are trying to find alternative methods now of making a living. It has been hard , but so far, we have come through.
- C: What was that time like here at Legal Services?
- B: Well, it was a feeling that we must roll up our sleeves and do something. We had an attorney here that was very adamant about doing something, just starting it. Went back for all steel workers and he also had a sign in his office that said, "An injury to one is an injury to all." He felt that this injury was to all. He went to court for them. The steelworkers sort of looked up to Staughton as their knight in shining armor because he stayed the hand of U.S. Steel for a while. They were determined to close the doors, but they could not close the doors almost until Staughton said so, because he stayed in their hand. We all went to court and that was quite interesting.
- C: Hazel, what have been the most significant changes that you have seen in Legal Services over the last 25 years?
- B: Well, first of all, we have grown. In the early days, we had an attorney and a secretary located in Community Action centers. Today we have our main office here in Mahoning County located in Youngstown. We have our own offices located in Trumbul County. We have our own offices located in Columbian County and that in itself is significant because we are no longer sharing just a room with someone. We have our own quarters and that is excellent. It is good to have attorney located there. At one time, we have sort of circuit rioters, for instance, out in Sebring and Columbiana County. We had an attorney who just went there once a week. Now we have full-time attorneys in these areas.
- C: Looking back, are there any changes that you would have like to have seen made, or any changes today that you would like to see made?
- B: There is one change that I have always wanted to make. When you look to the youth, the youth are your future. They are your future politicians, they are your future, period. Since we were in law offices, I used to always want an attorney to take some of the youth to juvenile court and just show them what happens to youngsters in juvenile court. It may

turn one youngster's head around. It may turn their thought, that they could have a better life. There is nothing like the first hand experience, seeing someone twelve years old, you are twelve years old, seeing a young man who is being disciplined in juvenile court. I never could get the point across to anyone. I thought, because you see the children today, they are so frustrated, you could get them off the streets. Just take them there and have them sit quietly in the back and have them watch what happens in juvenile court. That is one thing I have always wanted them to do.

C: What has been your most satisfying or fulfilling experience while you have worked here?

B: Well, Jim, the entire thing has been very satisfying, very rewarding. I have always had a sense of doing something for someone. As I said before, I love helping people, so this gave me an opportunity to help people. It has been one of the most satisfying things that I have done in my life. One of them, I said, okay.

C: Is there anything that you think is important to add that we have not covered?

B: We have covered many questions. No, I feel that we have a very, solid agency here and I feel that we are no longer putting band-aids on a wound. I feel that we are bandaging the entire wound of the poor in Youngstown. So I feel satisfied with what we are doing.

End Of Interview

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- B: In some instances it was hostile. They felt that Legal Services would take some of their clients from them, but I think the board explained to them that they would not have any competition. Because these were people on a low income level, who had never been afforded their day in court, and this is what the Legal Services was doing for the common man on the street, affording him a day in court. I remember them telling them one time, they said, "If our clients walked in your office, you would throw them out. You would not have this type of a \_\_\_\_\_." I think the board made the point, by virtue of the way that they were dressed, that they would not be welcomed in a private attorney's office. So this helped the private Bar a bit. Then there were some attorneys who would do pro-bone cases for us, after they realized that Legal Services was here to stay. But the general consensus was more or less hostile. I remember the first day I was here on the job, we got on the elevator and one attorney was in the elevator and he asked who we were. We identified ourselves and he said, "I will have you out of business in a month." This did not discourage us. We continued and, in fact, here we are twenty-five years later, still going strong.
- C: What was the attitude of the community, in general, to Legal Services at that time?
- B: Like a breath of fresh air for the poor people. The poor people, they came in droves. They were very happy to have someone, finally, to help them, and the other social agencies were also happy about it. But as I said, the private Bar Association still felt that we would be competing with them. People on the street were happy. They felt that this was a first in the United States, truly trying to help the poor people. People, for the most

part, welcomed Legal Services.

C: Can you think of any specific incidents or conversations you had either with clients or people in the community that reflected this attitude?

B: When we spoke with other agencies, they would always express their delight in having us there because they had so many people come to them that they had to turn away because they had no other avenues for them to explore. Then the clients themselves would come in and tell us what a blessing it was to have Legal Services. They said, "We finally have someone who wants to help us." Because at this point, poor people just had no one to help them. They were sort of always on the outside looking in, and at this point when Legal Services came in, they felt that they had someone that was on their side.

C: Could you describe the kind of cases that the office handled back in the first few years?

B: Well, some of them are still similar to what we handled today. We had housing matters, and we had domestic problems. At one point, we did handle bankruptcies; they were not as popular in that day as they are today. We handled other administrative problems, consumer problems; well, things of that nature.

C: Have you noticed a change over the years in the types of problems, the severity of problems that clients experience?

B: Yes. First of all, there is such a lack of morals today, and you find that people have many more difficult problems than they had before. Before, it was food, clothing, and shelter that they were trying to gain. But today, there is just an attitude of violence in the air and an attitude of disrespect in the air, an attitude of a lack of love and dis-concern for one another. People, in fact, twenty-five years ago, they were poor, but they still wanted to reach out and help their brother. Today, it is a completely different thing, with the drugs and the alcohol and the prostitution. Of course, that has always been with us. The drugs and the alcohol are just sort of killing the people's minds and I do not think there is a solution. Well, society has found no solution, but it is making a much more violent society for us today.

C: How have you seen that affect the types of problems that Legal Services gets, that you have seen?

B: That affects us. In the way that the clients come in, it is just a different type of problem. You have people who are on their jobs and they have a drug problem, now you find that employers are making allowances for this and they will ask them to go to a drug program. Sometimes, when you are employed today, they will ask you to take a urine test. This was unheard of before. That is one way that I noticed Jim.



C: How has your job changed over the years at Legal Services?

B: Very dramatically, I would say. I was the chief secretary for, I believe it was thirteen, fourteen years, and then they changed the name to an Administrative Secretary. I was secretary to all of the directors. Under the directorship of Bob Clyde, I changed jobs in the middle of the stream there. I was very well versed of the administrative end of Legal Services and all the rules and regulations, and functions. Then I changed to working with the attorneys and it was a welcomed change because, although I had been working around it for thirteen or fourteen years, I did not have any expertise in that area because of the position that I had. So it had changed. We started an employment team back in 1976 or 1978. I am not certain when, and I began working with Straughton Lynd and the employment team, and the employment team is still a viable part of Legal Services today.

C: What are some of the most significant changes you have seen since you have worked here?

B: I have seen so much in my own personal life. I have seen an interesting shift of interest. Almost all of the employees who have been with Legal Services have always been very much dedicated to Legal Services. I do remember that the jobs that I had were always overwhelming. There was just so much work and it just seemed there were so few hours to complete everything. Each time the phone rang it would give you a new problem. In the early years, I used to come to work on Saturdays, I used to come down on Sundays, and I used to take work home to the point where my husband told me, "Do not bring anything else in this house that says Legal Services on it." I was here, this is just where I was. My children told me, "You are married to your job." I reckon I was a workaholic, but there were just so many things to be done and you wanted to have them finished by Monday morning. I did that for a long, long time. On Sunday's you would find me down there. Sunday mornings, or Sunday afternoons, rather. Then I would be the only one there. I had so much comp time at one time, and there was no real light at the end of the tunnel. I just took it and dropped it in the wastepaper basket which was a grave mistake because later on we did get a director who honored your comp time. In the beginning they said, "Keep your comp time." I had kept it for years, but then after I started working with Staughton Lynd, not that my duties were any less, I still had a lot of duties, but it was just of a different nature. Then I noticed all of the attorneys coming down on Saturdays and they would come on Sundays and they would work late. It just reminded me of myself and the interest that I had. I felt that the new attorneys that had come on board had the same interest and they certainly wanted Legal Services to be successful.

C: What changes have you seen in the way the office operates, in the type of clients you may deal with, and just the office setting that they have compared to what you began with?

B: Somewhere along the way, the directors and the executive directors and the board

decided that we are a law office. We should look like a law office. Therefore, in 1983, we made a significant change, and we moved from the eighth floor and took over the entire seventh floor. We refurbished this place, we decorated this floor and had an open house for Legal Services. Our quarters now can compete with many of the attorneys of the private bar. This also gives our clients a better feeling about Legal Services. If you walk into somewhere that is not very attractive, you feel that, "I am not going to get very many results with my problem here." But you walk into Legal Services today, we have a very efficiently run office. We have a receptionist who is exceptional, I believe. And I think we have exceptional employees, both support staff and professional. We have a very good working relationship. I think we understand one another. I think we love one another. This is our home away from home, and I feel that we are doing an excellent job here for the poor public in Mahoning and surrounding counties.

- C: How has the management of the office changed, if at all, during the time that you have worked here, in terms of the style of the managers and how employees are treated and so forth?
- B: Dramatically, again, I should say dramatically. We had executive directors in the past who were attorneys, but they were not strong administrators. Many of the problems, the in-house problems, were not resolved at all. They were more or less pushed under the rug. Not saying anything against anyone, it is just that some people are stronger in knowing how to handle problems. Everyone does not have that gift. Many problems could have been resolved, but were not. We have an administrator now, Don Griesman, who is head and shoulders above everyone and he addresses everyone's problems. I observe that each job here at Legal Services is important to him, no matter what the task. Each job is important, and he meets with everyone and talks about your position and he talks about your job performance. He talks about how you are handling your day by day duties and he just gives you the feeling that you are one of us. We have always been together, but never like we are today. We just have a boss who is an administrator and he is also an attorney, and a gentleman.
- C: What can you say about how decisions have been made in the office over the years, in terms of whether the decisions are made by one person or whether they were decisions that were made by more than one person?
- B: Prior to Don Griesman's arrival, they were made by the director, with some input from the board. Now, our executive director has given us all an opportunity to have input with decisions or any problems that arise in Legal Services, and I think it is an excellent idea because it gives everyone the feeling that their opinion is important, too. Decisions are made by NOLS, of course not leaving the board out, but the employees have their input also.
- C: What do you consider some of the most important, significant things that you have been

involved with or the program has been involved with over the time that you have been here?

B: That is a hard question. We have been involved in so many things here. I think that as an overall picture, every position here at Legal Services is important and when you put them all together, that is what makes Legal Services. I have had an opportunity in the earlier days, we used to go out and give speeches to different social organizations and just apprise the public of what Legal Services is all about, because we were comparatively new in the area at that time and we wanted to reach the people. I remember going out and doing things like that because we did not have as many attorneys as we have now, so that was part of my job also. Of course, going to board meetings, that was part of my job also. I think today, we have a better way of reaching the public now. We have been there, by virtue of our longevity, and people know about us now and I think that we were handling a lot of things that we never handled before. We have many more attorneys, so naturally, the duties are spread out over to all the attorneys. We have a lot of attorneys in special fields now and, of course, the longer you are in a special field, the more accurate you become in dispensing knowledge to the public.

C: Was there any one period of time in which you feel that there was particular excitement or special things going on or things that were more memorable to you than other times?

B: Legal Services has always been kind of special and exciting to me because of the newness of it. I love helping people and just the fact that I have had a whole brand new county opened up to me, I was able to help a lot of people. There were several times that we had banquets in honor of what our anniversary date would be, and I remember one time that I handled the entire banquet and one other girl assisted and that was kind of an exciting time because I felt that if you have a banquet, that is publicity and that is going to help people know more about us. Just day by day, just the day to day duties of Legal Services have always been exciting to me. I have been here a long time and there has never been any two days alike. A lot of times, it has been frustrating, but never boring. I have never been bored a day in my life. I might have been disappointed about some things, but I have never been bored. This job has always been a challenge.

C: You said that no two days are alike. Could you describe what a typical day is like for you?

B: A typical day in Legal Services is to come in and have your mind set on what you are going to do and when you leave that day, sometimes you realize that the very first thing on your agenda has never been addressed. That is a typical day at Legal Services. I have often called it the office of interruptions. As soon as the phone rings, your agenda changes.

C: With that in mind, what do you usually do during the day, what activities do you

perform?

B: I answer phone calls for my bosses. I have three at the moment. I work with the employment team. That is people who have been discharged unjustly from their jobs. I handle all the intakes for each client that calls in. I have a summary of their problem and then I schedule all of the appointments for my bosses. I also act as a referral agent for unemployment compensation cases, social security cases, and worker's comp cases. There is always that walk in, that person that does not call in. They will walk in and I will have to do the same for them depending on what their problem is, either make an appointment or refer them. We have work on our computer and we check the Daily Legal News to see if any of our attorneys have cases that our scheduled in court. Occasionally, we run errands. I run errands for our boss to another attorney's office or to the courts. We have our case reviews where the attorneys meet once a week and discuss their cases that they may have a problem with or just a case that they need to share with the other attorneys. And I did go to operating engine meetings with one of the attorneys for months. That was quite interesting. I will handle most of the mailing for my bosses. There are other on-going routine, you could not call them mundane, but the are routine duties that we have to keep up with, our tickler files, just making certain that our attorneys are apprised of everything that they need to know.

C: How does the attitude of the private attorneys towards Legal Services today compare to what it was when you started?

B: I think there is an attitude of friendship now. I feel we have had a lot of private attorney involvement now with Legal Services. I think they probably look on us as an asset because we can help them in many ways. We do have clients that come in here. We have government financial guidelines that we have to follow, and occasionally, in fact, many times, clients come in and they are over our guidelines. We again are acting as a referral agent to these people; we refer them to the Bar Association and that gives some attorney another client.

C: Hazel, how do you think the attitude of the community clients towards Legal Services today, compares to what it was when you started?

B: Well, I think it is still good. In the beginning, they were so happy to have Legal Services in existence and I think today, it is the very same. We sent out a survey sheet to each client after their case is closed, in fact I was just going through it. We asked them to give their opinion of Legal Services, and by the attitudes of the people, as far as I can see, the public is still very happy about having Legal Services in Mahoning County.

C: Can you recall what it was like around here in the late 1970's when the steel mills were closing? Were there any impressions that stand out in your mind?

- B: Yes. There was complete devastation on the hearts and minds of people. The U.S. Steel was almost like apple pie. You do not get rid of apple pie. You just thought the steel mills would be there because they had always been there. The 6:00 news would interview people and they would express their dismay about the steel mills being gone. This was their livelihood. Sometimes there was two and three generations that had been in U.S. Steel and it was just a way of life in this town. The steel mills hired more people than anyone else in Youngstown, Ohio, but after that left, it helped people to realize that this was a reality, that this did close and that nothing is foolproof anymore. I think we know from today not only was it U.S. Steel. So many other cooperations and work places have gone out of existence since. People are trying to find alternative methods now of making a living. It has been hard , but so far, we have come through.
- C: What was that time like here at Legal Services?
- B: Well, it was a feeling that we must roll up our sleeves and do something. We had an attorney here that was very adamant about doing something, just starting it. Went back for all steel workers and he also had a sign in his office that said, "An injury to one is an injury to all." He felt that this injury was to all. He went to court for them. The steelworkers sort of looked up to Staughton as their knight in shining armor because he stayed the hand of U.S. Steel for a while. They were determined to close the doors, but they could not close the doors almost until Staughton said so, because he stayed in their hand. We all went to court and that was quite interesting.
- C: Hazel, what have been the most significant changes that you have seen in Legal Services over the last 25 years?
- B: Well, first of all, we have grown. In the early days, we had an attorney and a secretary located in Community Action centers. Today we have our main office here in Mahoning County located in Youngstown. We have our own offices located in Trumbul County. We have our own offices located in Columbian County and that in itself is significant because we are no longer sharing just a room with someone. We have our own quarters and that is excellent. It is good to have attorney located there. At one time, we have sort of circuit rioters, for instance, out in Sebring and Columbiana County. We had an attorney who just went there once a week. Now we have full-time attorneys in these areas.
- C: Looking back, are there any changes that you would have like to have seen made, or any changes today that you would like to see made?
- B: There is one change that I have always wanted to make. When you look to the youth, the youth are your future. They are your future politicians, they are your future, period. Since we were in law offices, I used to always want an attorney to take some of the youth to juvenile court and just show them what happens to youngsters in juvenile court. It may

turn one youngster's head around. It may turn their thought, that they could have a better life. There is nothing like the first hand experience, seeing someone twelve years old, you are twelve years old, seeing a young man who is being disciplined in juvenile court. I never could get the point across to anyone. I thought, because you see the children today, they are so frustrated, you could get them off the streets. Just take them there and have them sit quietly in the back and have them watch what happens in juvenile court. That is one thing I have always wanted them to do.

C: What has been your most satisfying or fulfilling experience while you have worked here?

B: Well, Jim, the entire thing has been very satisfying, very rewarding. I have always had a sense of doing something for someone. As I said before, I love helping people, so this gave me an opportunity to help people. It has been one of the most satisfying things that I have done in my life. One of them, I said, okay.

C: Is there anything that you think is important to add that we have not covered?

B: We have covered many questions. No, I feel that we have a very, solid agency here and I feel that we are no longer putting band-aids on a wound. I feel that we are bandaging the entire wound of the poor in Youngstown. So I feel satisfied with what we are doing.

End Of Interview