

Julie Lowenberg Bio for SMU Women's Symposium 2019

Julie grew up in Dallas where her "Roosevelt New Deal" parents instilled in her the core beliefs that all, regardless of race, creed or country of origin, are entitled to equal rights and opportunities and individual liberties. Julie was also brought up in the tradition of Reform Judaism which teaches that striving to "repair the world" and bring all people closer to peace, freedom and justice is a moral imperative.

At Radcliffe College and then Harvard Law School, Julie learned that she could compete with the best academically but, as one of only 25 women in her law class of over 500, she saw and felt firsthand the sex discrimination that was then pervasive in the traditionally male legal profession. Returning to Dallas after law school, Julie again encountered gender discrimination in law firms' hiring and employment practices, but she was fortunate to eventually find a professional "home" in a firm that gave her freedom to practice on a part time basis as her three children arrived.

During this time, in the early 1970's, Julie accepted the challenge of teaching, as an adjunct professor, the first-ever classes in "Gender Discrimination and the Law" at SMU Law School. This was an exciting and, for a feminist, gratifying time to be teaching the course: Ground-breaking, landmark decisions granting women unprecedented opportunities and freedoms were being handed down by the U.S. Supreme Court and rendering the textbook published a few years earlier almost obsolete.

Even as Julie saw and appreciated the dawning of a new era for women professionals, she decided around this time to leave the paid workforce and spend more time with her growing family. But also around this time, she joined the League of Women Voters (LWV) in a neighbor's living room and began her long and deeply satisfying "second career" - and informal but definitely in-depth education as a fulltime community volunteer. Through her involvement with LWV, National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) and other community organizations, Julie has gained deep satisfaction working to improve lives and secure civil liberties, the imperatives learned from her parents and her religion.

In LWV (where she has been president of both LWV-Dallas and LWV-Texas), Julie's first passion was voter services but she also soon turned her focus and efforts to citizen education and advocacy on a range of issues including domestic violence, juvenile justice, immigration and especially reproductive rights. As the LWV-Texas issue chair for reproductive choice and women's health for 25 years, she had many opportunities to hone her advocacy skills. Through NCJW (where she has been president of Greater Dallas Section, State Public Affairs Co-Chair and a director on NCJW's national board), Julie has worked on many of the same issues, with particular focus on the health and well-being of women, children and families and on immigrant rights and the need for humane and comprehensive immigration reform. Julie's interest in immigration and immigrants also inspired her volunteerism as an ESL social studies teacher and board member for Literacy Achieves (formerly Vickery Meadow Learning Center), and service on the board of directors of Human Rights Initiative of North Texas.