



Guide to the Patricia Lee oral history interview

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Summary Information

Repository:	University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives.
Creator:	Lee, Patricia
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Title:	Patricia Lee oral history interview
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Abstract:	<p>Oral history interview with Patricia Lee conducted by Stefani Evans and Claytee White on September 19, 2023 for the Boyer Early Las Vegas Oral History Project. Lee begins the interview by discussing her childhood in Daegu, South Korea, born to a Black American father and a Korean mother. Patricia Lee arrived in the United States with her parents as a young child when the U.S. Air Force transferred her father to Vandenburg Air Force Base in California. Lee was seven when her father left. With her mother speaking no English, Lee was responsible for her family's food stamps and social services even as they endured serial evictions and homelessness that included a stay in a shelter for abused women. In middle school, Upward Bound was Lee's "game-changer." As she had in high school, Lee immersed herself in student life and academics at the University of Southern California, while also working several jobs. After graduation, she worked at the California Science Center Museum before entering law school at George Washington University. She graduated in May 2002, shortly after the legal profession had lost several top law firms that had been headquartered in New York City's Twin Towers. When she accepted an offer from Las Vegas firm Hutchison & Steffen, she became the firm's first woman attorney and first attorney of color; seven years later, she became the firm's first woman partner and first partner of color. Lee was appointed to the bench of the Supreme Court of Nevada in November 2022 by Governor Steve Sisolak.</p>

Preferred Citation

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Scope and Contents Note

Oral history interview with Patricia Lee conducted by Stefani Evans and Claytee White on September 19, 2023 for the Boyer Early Las Vegas Oral History Project. Lee begins the interview by discussing her childhood in Daegu, South Korea, born to a Black American father and a Korean mother. Patricia Lee arrived in the United States with her parents as a young child when the U.S. Air Force transferred her father to Vandenburg Air Force Base in California. Lee's two brothers were born on base, before the family moved to nearby Lompoc. Lee was seven when her father left. With her mother speaking no English, Lee was responsible for her family's food stamps and social services even as they endured serial evictions and homelessness that included a stay in a shelter for abused women.

In middle school, Upward Bound was Lee's "game-changer," providing tutoring, seminars, summer stays at the nearby University of California Santa Barbara, college tour trips, and five fee waivers for college applications. As she had in high school, Lee immersed herself in student life and academics at the University of Southern California, while also working several jobs. After graduation, she worked at the California Science Center Museum before entering law school at George Washington University. She graduated in May 2002, shortly after the legal profession had lost several top law firms that had been headquartered in New York City's Twin Towers. When she accepted an offer from Las Vegas firm Hutchison & Steffen, she became the firm's first woman attorney and first attorney of color; seven years later, she became the firm's first woman partner and first partner of color. Lee was appointed to the bench of the Supreme Court of Nevada in November 2022 by Governor Steve Sisolak. Digital audio available; no transcript available.

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Administrative Information

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

This interview was conducted and transcribed by the Oral History Research Center (OHRC) which is part of the UNLV University Libraries Special Collections and Archives Division.

Processing Information

Interview materials were processed by UNLV Libraries Special Collections and Archives in 2023. Sarah Jones wrote the collection description. Access copies were created for born-digital audio files.

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Names and Subjects

- Women lawyers
- Homelessness -- United States
- Oral histories (document genres)
- Upward Bound Program (U.S.)
- Nevada. Supreme Court
- Upward Bound Program (U.S.)