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## Reconciling Pinstripes and Pearls

Carl W. Tobias

*University of Richmond*, [ctobias@richmond.edu](mailto:ctobias@richmond.edu)

Margaret L. Sanner

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## RECONCILING PINSTRIPES & PEARLS

PINSTRIPES & PEARLS: THE WOMEN OF THE HARVARD LAW SCHOOL CLASS OF '64 WHO FORGED AN OLD-GIRL NETWORK AND PAVED THE WAY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS. BY JUDITH RICHARDS HOPE. NEW YORK, SCRIBNER, 2003.

*Reviewed by Margaret L. Sanner & Carl Tobias†*

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### INTRODUCTION

Women comprise nearly one half of American law students and thirty percent of the practicing bar. Although many female students and lawyers have achieved great success, considerable work remains, if society is to achieve parity between men and women in the field. For instance, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg is the only woman on the United States Supreme Court, female judges constitute a mere quarter of the thirteen United States Courts of Appeals' total members, and no woman has ever received an appointment to a number of the ninety-four federal district courts. Virtually no state supreme court has included a female majority. A tiny percentage of the equity partners in major law firms are women. For many women, satisfying at once the enormous demands of clients and of young children has also proven intractable.

*Pinstripes & Pearls*, Judith Richards Hope's new memoir about the 15 women who graduated from Harvard Law School in 1964, clarifies the difficulties imposed by legal education and the legal profession at a time when there were minuscule numbers of female students and attorneys. Hope, the first woman to become a partner at the prominent law firm Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker, recounts the indignities that her female colleagues and she experienced while attending Harvard, seeking employment, and pursuing professional careers. Hope trenchantly

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† Margaret Sanner, Counsel at Reed Smith LLP, has practiced for two decades. Carl Tobias, the Williams Professor at the University of Richmond School of Law, has taught for three decades. He thanks Judy Canter for processing this review and Russell Williams for generous, continuing support.

reveals the complexities of “having it all,” on both a professional and personal level.

These ideas mean that Hope’s book, which illuminates women’s entry into law schools and the profession, facilitating valuable comparisons with today, merits analysis. Our review undertakes that effort. We first descriptively scrutinize the volume, ascertaining it elucidates how the writer and her classmates responded to the problems they faced at Harvard Law School and in their careers. Our review then discusses the memoir’s numerous virtues. Finally, we proffer several recommendations.

### I. DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

Judith Richards Hope dramatically opens with an account of her inaugural meeting as a fellow on the Harvard University senior trustee board, to which she won election a quarter century after her graduation from Harvard’s Law School. The mild hazing that welcomed Hope on this occasion epitomizes her accomplishment as the first female member named during the board’s 350-year history and the complications that she would have to overcome in fulfilling her responsibilities in this post.

The author then provides her readers with a depiction of the Harvard where she began her journey. Hope characterizes the law school as a “male academic boot camp” and a Lake Wobegon in which all the students are brilliant, tough-minded, and attractive and the faculty stimulating, rigorous, and entertaining. No women attended Harvard until 1950 when the law school voted to admit them. She introduces the fifteen female graduates in the five hundred thirteen-person class by describing them as the first wave who attempted to do everything. Hope contends that those individuals addressed many difficulties that women still encounter without losing their femininity, nerve, or minds. The female students came from diverse backgrounds, yet all shared particular attributes: they were first-born, or only, children of strong, middle-class parents, whom the wars formed. A number had attended the Seven Sisters, which trained graduates for “life,” not the male professional world, but most rejected the 1960s norms that demanded that they either pursue a career and remain single or forego a career in favor of marriage and family. The women anticipated the problems they would meet and nevertheless chose Harvard so as to secure for themselves the benefits of the finest legal education and access to powerful professional networks.

The second part, “Law School,” focuses on the initial year, yet canvasses each of the author’s three years in law school. The writer reiterates her assertions that Harvard provided the greatest collection of legal thinkers and scholars, who taught the best students. The numerous obstacles the institution posed for women’s success ranged from the few,

bleak, and distant restrooms that, nonetheless, afforded female students a refuge, to the all-male faculty, some of whom opposed, or reluctantly acquiesced in, female students' matriculation. Equally illustrative was the horrifying "Ladies Day," so named because it was the only time that semester when one professor called on women. As informative was a dinner party at which then-Dean Erwin Griswold queried every new female student on why the woman chose to occupy a male's place—the kind of question the dean would never have asked men. The grueling first year of intensive labor culminated with six, four-hour examinations over ten days. The female students acquitted themselves well, but none compiled grades ranking in the top fifty. Most of the original fifteen went on to earn law degrees, although several women finished at other institutions or deferred their legal educations. Hope proclaims that the female students' graduation disproved the assumption that women could not marry and practice. All had mastered a body of law and how to negotiate the male preserve.

Part Three, "Real World," examines "June 1964 Forward." Many law firms would not hire women, and the Harvard Placement Office provided little career assistance to its female alumni. She reviews the fifteen classmates' job searches. Her own experience teaches, and should inspire, modern female attorneys because it displayed raw courage and great finesse. Hope persuaded the Kennedy Administration Justice Department to extend an offer, which she leveraged using brazen confidence, salty language, and knowledge of football, into a position with Edward Bennett Williams, the quintessential Washington lawyer.

Hope next assesses career ebbs and flows through the prism of each different woman's situations. For the author, unsettling machinations at the firm led her to chart a new career direction. She married Tony Hope, Bob Hope's son, had and reared two children, taught part-time at Pepperdine Law School and briefly enjoyed the "laid back Malibu life." A familial crisis spurred Hope's reentry into the market as an upper-echelon Ford White House official, and she later assumed a partnership at Paul, Hastings. However, "doing it all" meant Hope was exhausted for 20 years; had assistants cover for her at work, so she could discharge her maternal responsibilities; and precariously juggled firm and domestic obligations. The most poignant vignette in the book is her adult daughter's frank, searing characterization of Hope as a "woman too invincible, too pushy, too isolated, too sedentary, too tired. A woman I have never seen truly laugh or truly cry. A woman without needs. A tank." This description makes Hope "indescribably sad." It prompts her concession that she might have attempted a "little less," even while the writer justifies her behavior as having fulfilled duties to herself, Hope's parents Harvard and the firm. She admits that serving the needs of demanding

clients and rearing young children may be incompatible. Hope's revelation is at once brave, compelling and heart-wrenching.

The fourth part, "Bumps in the Road," explores the setbacks which her classmates met because they led ambitious, complex lives yet were not "invincible." For example, one colleague was so troubled personally and professionally that she attempted suicide. The author herself "trudged" through a dozen years, sprinting only to remain in the identical place. She asserts that when all else failed the women's sense of the absurd, survival instincts and trust in each other rescued them.

Part Five, "At the Table," shows the fifteen classmates distinguished themselves in many essential arenas, repudiating the conventional wisdom that female lawyers were not tough or dedicated enough to succeed. Illustrative are Patricia Scott Schroeder, whose work on matters respecting women and families continues to affect strongly public policy debate, and Judith Wilson Rogers, who is the initial African-American female to serve on the D.C. Circuit. Hope earned an honorary doctor of laws from Harvard and facilitated Paul, Hastings' growth, although she intimates that these achievements contributed to her divorce.

The sixth part, "Exit From the Fast Lane?," muses over decelerating, retiring, shifting priorities, valuing friends and families more, and having the time to develop and pursue other crucial aspects of these fifteen women's lives. Hope writes about building a simple, rural Virginia farmhouse, which her father and children might use, yearning to enjoy activities she undertook in her youth, and slowing down after forty years on the fast track.

Hope proffers a coda, asserting that her female classmates revolutionized the then-male legal profession, mentored other women, and performed as effectively as they could. She thinks the major conundrum for female lawyers in the 1960s and today is balancing the demands which careers and families impose. Hope suggests that flexible work environments and schedules have ameliorated this complication, that women on the bench offer more diverse perspectives to the law, and that even Harvard has improved with time. She closes with the ideas that her classmates observed Learned Hand's exhortation to practice law as craft, and that they found one another, which made all the difference.

## II. CONTRIBUTIONS

*Pinstripes & Pearls* substantially increases our understanding of the characteristics and values that enabled female students to hurdle the myriad obstacles they confronted at Harvard Law School four decades ago while satisfying burdensome professional and familial commitments. Hope, when retelling these women's individual stories, vividly renders the problems which arose and deftly underscores the triumphs.

Similarly instructive is Hope's meticulous examination of those 1964 graduates mainly through her classmates' reflections at discrete phases in their professional and personal lives. *Pinstripes & Pearls* significantly augments knowledge regarding female law students and attorneys. For instance, considerable research treats early pioneers, such as Myra Bradwell, the first women who attended Harvard and other schools, and later trailblazers, namely Justices Sandra Day O'Connor and Ginsburg, including O'Connor's recent *Lazy B* and *The Majesty of the Law*. Numerous observers have concomitantly assessed women in legal education and the profession since high numbers began matriculating. However, there is rather limited work on 1960s graduates—the female practitioners who comprised the initial small wave. In short, Hope expands appreciation of women at this important time as well as their professional and personal travails and victories, while her memoir can be productively compared with analogous research.

*Pinstripes & Pearls* is also balanced and candid. Hope seems to hold no dogmatic perspectives on the complex matters that she evaluates. The writer frontally addresses many controversial issues about women's entry into law schools and the legal profession by tendering a wide spectrum of experiences. Illustrative is the justifiable pride which Hope displays in her classmates' hard-earned, substantial accomplishments. Nevertheless, she clearly recognizes that these successes often exacted a great toll and that there are multiple, efficacious tracks by which the women could have fostered career and personal satisfaction. Indeed, Hope is strikingly open when she questions her ability to juggle practicing law and rearing children. This volume, thus, may serve as a cautionary tale for women as well as for men about professional existence in the fast lane.

### III. SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Despite Hope's insights, we can afford suggestions. Certain of her ideas merit elaboration. She poses numerous cogent questions but does not resolve some and grants a number little treatment while offering rather few constructive solutions. For example, Hope's analysis of the blatant gender discrimination she and her classmates encountered might profit from amplification. She does mention the financial underpinnings of the male-dominated profession by invoking the query Dean Griswold and additional observers expressly raised: why are women taking positions men would otherwise assume? Nonetheless, Hope could have detailed the ways in which meaningful reform necessitated that males yield actual economic, political or social power—a change that many opposed. Her assessment of the lessons to be gleaned when more women entered the profession would similarly benefit from expansion. For instance,

comprehending how law firms treated female associates' requests for leaves of absence to give birth or to rear young children would illuminate modern workplace issues, such as the leaves' relevance for partnership decisions. This understanding would also help law firm management committees and public policymakers determine whether government and private arrangements which now control these matters warrant reform.

Several features of *Pinstripes & Pearls* may deserve criticism. For example, certain readers might think that the book's substance and form are too optimistic or self-congratulatory, ideas which the volume's overstated subtitle manifests. However, Hope's frank acknowledgement that she and her classmates experienced setbacks tempers those notions. Others may find jarring repeated allusions to her own and her colleagues' physical beauty and the focus on "marrying well," a phenomenon she illustrates when Elizabeth Hanford weds Bob Dole. The references and this emphasis suggest the importance early female lawyers attached to preservation of their identities when mastering a trade and embarking on a lifestyle that were alien. The constant discussion which implicates appearance and marriage, so viewed, reflects a persisting struggle for women in a profession that male mores continue to dominate.

The propositions above do not undermine Hope's significant contributions. Apparently insolvable gender-related questions, such as lingering, but subtler, discrimination and the optimal calibration of professional and familial responsibilities, are the most pressing difficulties which contemporary law schools and firms need to address, while the issues might well defy felicitous resolution.

#### CONCLUSION

*Pinstripes & Pearls* is a valuable analysis of the educational, career and personal experiences of the fifteen women who graduated from Harvard Law School in 1964. Judith Richards Hope offers a thorough, concise, balanced, and incisive account of how these female students and attorneys treated the problems that they met. The greatest challenges for women in legal education and the profession are how to capitalize on this groundbreaking work and to reconcile better career and familial demands.