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NINTH JUDICIAL COMMITTEE

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FAX COVER SHEET

9/25/92

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DATE

TIME

William Glaberson
THE NEW YORK TIMES

TO:

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FAX NUMBER:

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This fax consists of a total of _____ pages, including this cover sheet. If you do not receive the indicated number of pages, or if there is a question as to the transmittal, please call (914) 997-8105.

Elena Ruth Sassower, Coordinator

FROM:

MESSAGE:

Dear Mr. Glaberson:

Since you expressed surprise that I was a hebrew school teacher-- you clearly overlooked the Profile appearing at the end of our critique. It is being faxed herewith in the hope that you will reconsider the hostile feelings you demonstrated when you asked me, the first time we met, whether I was related to "the attorney Sassower".

Perhaps in the New Year you will put aside your angry prejudices--and consider our critique objectively.

*Elena Ruth
Sassower*

PROFILE

NINTH JUDICIAL COMMITTEE is an unfunded citizens' group of lawyers and laypeople dedicated to a quality judiciary. It was founded in 1989 by Eli Vigliano, Esq., in response to the trading of state court judgeships by the major party leaders in the Ninth Judicial District of New York. The Ninth Judicial Committee has since spearheaded two state court cases challenging the political control of judicial nominations: Castracan v. Colavita in 1990 and Sady v. Murphy in 1991. The odyssey of those two cases in the state courts was outlined in a recent letter to Governor Cuomo's Task Force on Judicial Diversity (annexed as Ex. "Y" to the Committee's submission). The related federal case of Maxey v. Schaeffer is presently pending in the Federal Court of the Southern District of New York.

DORIS L. SASSOWER, Director of the Ninth Judicial Committee, is a cum laude graduate of New York University Law School, where she was a Florence Allen Scholar (named for the first woman to serve as a Chief Judge of a federal appeals court). Following her admission to the bar in 1955, she was appointed, in 1956, to work for one of the foremost champions of court reform--Arthur T. Vanderbilt, then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New Jersey, for whom she worked until his death in 1957.

Returning to private practice (in which she remained for more than thirty-five years), she continued her interest in improving the quality of the judiciary as President of the New York Women's Bar Association from 1968-69 and became a leader of the women's rights movement before there was a recognized "movement". She actively promoted the importance of increasing the number of women in the legal profession and on the bench, a subject on which she spoke before the National Conference of Bar Presidents in 1969--the first woman ever to address that body.

In 1970, she became President of Phi Beta Kappa Alumnae in New York, and in 1971, she represented the New York Women's Bar Association on one of the earliest judicial screening panels set up in New York County. An article which she wrote about her experience, expressing her views about the value of pre-nomination screening, was published on the front page of the New York Law Journal on October 22, 1971. Thereafter, the New York State Bar Association invited her to become the first woman member of its Judiciary Committee.

In that capacity, she served for eight years--in which she spent hundreds of hours, pro bono, interviewing candidates for the New York State Court of Appeals, the Appellate Division of the New York Supreme Court, and the state Court of Claims.

A Fellow of the Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers and winner of numerous awards, in 1973 she was named by the American Bar Association as its first woman Chair of the National Association of Lawyers and Social Workers. In 1981, the National Organization for Women gave her a Special Award in recognition of her work on legislative reform of New York's divorce law and for her "outstanding efforts on behalf of women and children in the area of Family Law".

In June 1989, she was honored by election to the Fellows of the American Bar Foundation, "an honor reserved for less than one-third of one percent of the practicing bar in each State", awarded "to lawyers whose professional, public, and private careers have demonstrated outstanding dedication to the welfare of their communities and to the objectives of the American Bar Association...".

In 1990, as pro bono counsel to the NINTH JUDICIAL COMMITTEE, she brought the lawsuit of Castracan v. Colavita, to challenge the manipulation of state court judgeships by political party bosses--which was dismissed without an adjudication on the merits.

On June 14, 1991, she was suspended from the practice of law immediately, indefinitely, unconditionally--and without any hearing--five days after The New York Times reported her intention to take the Castracan case to the Court of Appeals. This has not silenced her from speaking forcefully on the critical issues of reform of the judicial selection process.

The within submission by her as Director of the Ninth Judicial Committee reflects her continuing commitment to the fundamental democratic principles involved.

ELENA RUTH SASSOWER, Coordinator of the Ninth Judicial Committee, is the daughter of Doris L. Sassower. She is also the daughter of George Sassower¹, a lawyer for nearly 40 years, who paid an even more exorbitant price than her mother for his courage in standing up to--and speaking out against--the corruption of our judicial system.

In July 1974 when she was 18 years old, Elena Sassower was featured by the news media who made quite a fuss over the fact that she was the "first on line" to hear the case of U.S. v. Richard Nixon at the Supreme Court. Her photograph not only appeared on the front page of the July 8, 1974 issue of The New York Times, but news items about her were carried as far as the front-page of the Bankok World. She hopes that the substantive

¹ Doris Sassower and George Sassower were divorced some years ago, a result of the stresses of battling against unfit judges.

issues documented by the within submission will receive no less media coverage--since they deserve far more.

When not working, pro bono, on behalf of the Ninth Judicial Committee, Elena Sassower is a Hebrew school teacher.

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DORIS L. SASSOWER, born New York, N.Y., September 25, 1932; admitted to bar, 1955, New York; 1961, U.S. Supreme Court, U.S. Claims Court, 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 in 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. 24 E 815-6, February 5, 1969; The New York Womens 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, New York, by appointment of Governor Carey, 1977-1986 (Chair, 1982-1986). 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.

"AV" rating
1989 edition