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**HARRIET PUTNAM HENRY PAPERS  
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**By  
Elizabeth Sistare**

**Portland, Maine  
November 2013**

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## Administrative Information

Provenance: Donated in 2001.

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Restrictions on access: The collection is open for research.

## Biographical Note

Harriet Putnam Henry was born on Sept. 28, 1923 in Ashland, Ky., the daughter of Donald H. Putnam Sr. and Hannah Russell Putnam. She was a direct descendant of John Putnam, who arrived in Salem, Mass. in 1640 and of Major General Israel Putnam of Revolutionary War fame. She graduated from Smith College in 1945 and earned a J.D. from George Washington School of Law in 1954. In Washington she worked as an economic analyst in the Office of the Quartermaster General (1945-46), and as a research analyst in the National Security Agency (1946-1957). She came to Maine in 1958, establishing the Portland Housing Authority and serving as its chair. She was also active in the Portland League of Women Voters, serving as president from 1963-1965, and as the chair of the tax committee.

In 1968 she became the research director of a project under the Office of Sea Grant Programs and the University of Maine Law School to study marine resources, fishery regulations, shore property zoning, regulations and restrictions, and other marine related affairs. The project resulted in a four-volume study entitled *Maine Law Affecting Marine Resources* (1969-1970). From 1970-1973 she served as a consultant to public agencies on marine, environmental law, and coastal zone management related projects.

In 1973 Henry was appointed as Maine's first female judge by Governor Kenneth Curtis. She became an advocate for women judges, serving on the boards of the National Center for State Courts, the Woman's Judges' Fund for Justice, and as a chair of the National Association of Women Judges Professional Leave Committee. She worked to ensure proper maternal and paternal leaves to ensure judicial job satisfaction. She also was known for her work in the areas of child abuse and child welfare, serving as co-chair of the Children Committee on Child Support Rules. She wrote the history of the Maine Court: *The Maine District Court: Twenty-five Years of Progress* in 1987. She was also a founding member of the National Association of Women judges, a member of the ABA Coordinating Committee on AIDS and the Bio-Ethics. She retired from the District Court in 1990.

In her retirement Henry chaired The Commission to Study the Future of Maine Courts. She served on the Board of the Maine Historical Society, Sweetser, and Piper Shores. She was a Chair member of the Maine Humanities Council, a member of the Maine Commission on Governmental Ethics and Elections, and a corporator of Maine Medical Center. She was a member of Trinity Episcopal Church in Portland and served as a member of the Episcopal Diocesan Commission on Ministry and was chief judge of the Diocesan Ecclesiastical Court. She received an honorary degree from Bowdoin College, an honorary degree and the Mary Hartman Award from the University of Maine, Orono, and the Deborah Morton Award from Westbrook College. In 2003, the Maine Humanities Council dedicated the Harriet P. Henry Center for the Book in her honor. Henry died on September 11, 2004 at the age of 80 after a battle with ovarian cancer. She was survived by her husband and three children.

### **Description of the Papers**

These papers contain 58 items. Topics include women in the courtroom, women judges and lawyers. Also, some papers have to do with women's rights in general, abortion, sexual assault, and child support/family matters. Dates span 1944 to 1996; the bulk of which is from 1980-1990. The collection includes publications and correspondence from the American Bar Association; Henry's college papers; articles, reports, and clippings about women in the law profession; bibliographies about women's issues in the courtroom; and publications about women in law from a variety of journals.

#### **Series 1. American Bar Association's Investigations (1985-1989)**

This series includes publications and correspondence of the American Bar Association. There are reports about the underrepresentation of women in Law as well as other minorities from ABA committees.

#### **Series 2. Personal Writings (1944, 1972)**

This series contains two papers written by Harriet Putnam Henry for a college government class as well as an envelope addressed to her with small notes handwritten on the outside.

#### **Series 3. Articles, Reports, and Clippings (1944-1996, undated)**

This series includes articles, reports, and clippings pertaining to women's rights issues. Some topics include the promotion of women lawyers, equality for women in the law profession, and the advancement of all women's legal rights in court cases having to do with sexual assault and child support/alimony.

#### **Series 4. Bibliographies (1984, 1989, undated)**

This series contains two suggested reading lists and a bibliography on topics of women in the Law profession as well as women in courtroom cases about sexual assault and family court matters, such as child support and alimony.

**Series 5. Publications (1941-1995)**

This series contains journal publications as well as *U.S. Commission on Civil Rights* publications assessing women in the law profession – push for equality. Other women’s issues are also evaluated.

**Series 1. American Bar Association’s Investigations (1985-1989)**

Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
1	1	American Bar Association (ABA), General	1987-1988
1	2	ABA Women in Law Commission	undated
1	3	ABA Section on Rights and Responsibilities	1989
1	4	ABA Task Force on Minorities in Law	1985

**Series 2. Personal Writings (1944, 1972)**

1	5	College papers	1944
1	6	Empty envelope with handwritten notes	1972

**Series 3. Articles, Reports, and Clippings (1944-1996, undated)**

1	7	Clippings	1944,1990, undated
1	8	Center for Women Policy Studies, “Sexual Assault: The Facts”	undated
1	9	Citizen’s Advisory Council on the Status of Women, four reports	1970, undated
1	10	“Report of the Maine Commission on Gender, Justice, and the Courts”	1996
1	11	Minnesota Supreme Court Task Force for Gender Fairness in the Courts	1989
1	12	National Judicial Education Program to Promote Equality for Women and Men in the Courts, “Annual Report”	1987
1	13	“Women Judges Making a Difference”	undated

**Series 4. Bibliographies (1984, 1989, undated)**

1	14	National Association of Women Judges, Bibliography for the 10th Anniversary Celebration	[1989]
1	15	National Center for State Courts, “Bibliography on Women in the Law”	1984
1	16	Center for Women Policy Studies, publication list	undated

**Series 5. Publications (1941-1995)**

Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
1	17	N.A.A.C.P. literature	1941-1942
1	18	Constitution (v.2 no.2, Spring/Summer)	1990
1	19	Court Review (v.26 no. 3)	1989
1	20	Humanities (v.16 no.4)	1995
1	21	Judicature (v.77 no.3, Nov/Dec)	1993
1	22	<i>Law and Social Inquiry</i> , Journal of the American Bar Foundation (v.14 no.2, Spring)	1989
1	23	<i>New York Law School Law Review</i> (v.55 no.2)	1990
1	24	<i>Proceedings of the National Conference on Gender Bias in the Courts</i>	1990
1	25	<i>St. Louis Bar Journal</i> (v.35 no.4, Spring)	1985
2	26	U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, <i>Child Care and Equality Opportunities for Women</i>	1981
2	27	U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, <i>The Equal Rights Amendment: Guaranteeing Equal Rights for Women Under the Constitution</i>	1981
2	28	U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, <i>More Hurdles to Clear: Women and Girls in Competitive Athletics</i>	1980
2	29	<i>American Women : Report of the President's Commission on the Status of Women</i>	1963
2	30	Maine Department of Manpower Affairs, <i>Women and Minority Labor Force in Maine</i>	1979
2	31	National Center for State Courts, <i>Women in the Courts</i>	1978