

The First 50 Women in Idaho Law

EDITH SCHMITT ANDERSON

October 31, 1955

(1900 – 1989)



Edith Schmit Anderson was born on October 13, 1900, about 15 miles outside Pueblo, Colorado, to Anthony S. and Frances Belle (Prose) Schmit. Her father worked as a carpenter and was active in the Carpenters Union Labor Organization and her mother was a housewife. Anderson had a brother, Victor, who worked for Mountain Bell Telephone. In 1906, the family moved to Idaho Falls and Anderson attended school there. In 1912, she moved to Pocatello, graduating from Pocatello High School in 1917.

Anderson attended Idaho State College in Pocatello from 1917-18, and then went to work for Citizen's Bank and Trust Company in Pocatello in various positions including, bank clerk, bookkeeper and secretary, until 1924. On July 30, 1925, she married Carl Albert Anderson, a carpenter, in Preston. Together they had one daughter, Ellen Anderson (Wahlgren), after which Anderson chose to stay home to raise her daughter.

In 1945, Anderson returned to the workforce as a secretary in the Pocatello law firm of Merrill & Merrill until 1953. Thereafter, she went to work for O. R. Baum and one the of the few practicing women attorneys in Idaho, Ruby Y. Brown, in Pocatello as a law clerk.

In 1950, at the age of 50, Anderson returned to Idaho State College and graduated in 1951. Beginning in 1951 and continuing through 1955, Anderson engaged in law office study to prepare for the Bar under the tutelage of attorney Wesley Merrill. Her studies paid off, and on October 31, 1955, Anderson was admitted to practice in Idaho as the state's twenty-eighth woman attorney. Anderson's husband, daughter and future son-in-law were all present for her swearing in and report that "[e]ach of us felt a swelling of pride that she had accomplished this without going to law school." Anderson had her own private practice in Pocatello, specializing in estate and probate work, until her retirement in 1982.

Anderson enjoyed reading and studying the French language and riding her horse around the foothills of Pocatello. In fact, her daughter describes her as "an environmental steward long before so much emphasis was placed on the environment." Anderson was also an active member of the Congregational Church in Pocatello.

Anderson died on March 22, 1989, at her home in Pocatello at the age of 88.