

The First 50 Women in Idaho Law

LUCINDA WEISS

November 1, 1973



Lucinda Weiss was born in 1950 in Akron, Ohio. She attended school in Akron and graduated in 1967 from Old Trail School. Thereafter, Weiss attended The College of Wooster, in Wooster, Ohio, where she originally studied chemistry.

Around this same time Weiss' parents both became public school teachers and applied for summer study fellowships across the country. Weiss' father received a Masters fellowship for three summers (1968-70) at the University of Idaho. Since major race riots were expected to erupt in Weiss' hometown of Akron during the summer of 1969, her parents insisted that she join them in Moscow for the summer. After finishing her sophomore year at Wooster, Weiss joined her parents in Moscow and enrolled in summer school at the UI to keep herself occupied.

During the summer of 1969, Weiss interviewed at the College of Law "for practice." Interestingly, Weiss asked Dean Menard whether the law school encouraged women to apply, and he answered "no." When pressed by Weiss why not, "words failed him." Also during that summer, Weiss "met and fell in love with an undergrad" and transferred to the University of Idaho in July. She reversed that transfer in August, however, once she learned that she had enough credits to be senior at Wooster, but would only be junior at the University of Idaho. Weiss returned for her third and final year at Wooster, changing her course of study from chemistry to political science and French culture. She took a political science course on civil liberties and, after taking a second course on Constitutional law from the same lawyer-professor, "loved it enough to switch majors."

Given that the Kent State killings happened only "45 miles up the road" in the spring of 1970, Weiss decided that law sounded like a good way to get into "the system" and change things for the better. As Weiss describes things, "my radical bent needed a more conservative outlet than protest marches (and getting beaten up or arrested)." Weiss applied to one law school, the University of Idaho, and got in. Shortly thereafter, she and her boyfriend at the University of Idaho broke up. Weiss says, "I was stuck, and it has been one of the luckier things that ever happened to me."

In 1970, Weiss began her studies at the University of Idaho College of Law. Weiss excelled academically in law school and served on the *Idaho Law Review*. In 1972, she became the first woman at the University of Idaho to participate in Boise Cascade's law internship program – intentionally or not, setting her on a corporate career path.

Weiss graduated from the University of Idaho College of Law in 1973, and was admitted to practice law in Idaho on November 1, 1973. Her first job as a lawyer was with the small general practice firm of Bandelin & Featherstone (later Bandelin & Associates) in Sandpoint. Then, in 1974, at the age of 24, Weiss was elected prosecuting attorney for Bonner County – making her

one of the youngest prosecutors in the nation and only one of three women elected to such a position nationwide that year.

Weiss recalls that one particularly “unusual first” for her was to be defense counsel in the first jury trial in North Idaho with women counsel chairing opposing sides. Sandra Younghans (No. 44 on this list) was plaintiff’s counsel. As such, the local press dubbed the case as the “Cindy and Sandy show.”

In 1976, while Weiss was serving as Bonner County’s prosecuting attorney, she made a trip home to Akron to visit her ailing father. That trip proved to be a pivotal moment in her career. During the visit, Weiss had lunch with a family friend and after what seemed like an informal chatting session over sandwiches, learned that her lunch was actually an interview for a position as a lawyer at The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company. To her surprise, Weiss got a phone call a few days later asking her to come in for a second interview. Weiss’ response, “I did not even know I had the first one.”

Weiss joined the Law Department of Goodyear in 1976, making her the first woman attorney in the tire industry. That began a more than 25-year career in law and management at the world-renowned tire company, which now conducts business in more than 60 countries and on six continents. Weiss has served in several legal assignments at Goodyear, as well as becoming Director of Real Estate in 1991. Returning to the Law Department in 1996, Weiss heads Goodyear’s ethics program. In that role, she has led the effort to “globalize” the ethics program and expand it into sectors of Goodyear covered by collective bargaining agreements. Her main practice areas are global trade practices and Goodyear’s aviation products business.

Outside of her regular work, Weiss has a passion for the professional and educational development of others. She co-founded and was the first president of the Women’s Initiatives in Leadership, Goodyear’s mentoring and leadership development group. Weiss was also a four-year member of the University of Idaho’s College of Law inaugural Law Advisory Council, a group of law professionals dedicated to investigating how UI’s law program should progress in the 21st century.

Weiss is also an active civic volunteer and community leader for many organizations. She has served as a trustee of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Junior League of Akron, Summit County Historical Society, Old Trail School and the P.W. Litchfield Awards Association, and has held various offices in each of these and many other organizations. Weiss was appointed by Summit County, Ohio, to the Board of the Akron-Canton Regional Airport Authority, where she is in her third term as an airport trustee. Akron Canton is the fastest growing airport in the United States.

On her birthday in 2003, the University of Idaho presented Weiss with its Silver & Gold Award, which recognizes graduates with distinguished records of achievement and service in their specialized area of endeavor, thus bringing honor and recognition to the University. In 2004, she was inducted into the Executive Order of Ohio Commodores by Governor Taft, in recognition of contributions to the economic development of the state of Ohio.