

“The New Lady Lawyer in Town”

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Manning profiled in an oral history of the first wave of female attorneys

Kathleen Manning (New Orleans) was one of five attorneys profiled in a 2019 *Louisiana Super Lawyers Magazine* feature on the oral history of females practicing law in the state.

The Head and Master [rule] was a big deal when I was in law school. There were still restrictions on women as far as signing mortgages and entering contracts, where the husband had to be part of the deal. We had a professor who was particularly strong in his belief that it was entirely appropriate and should never be changed. I didn't have that particular guy, who was such a jerk, because I chose to have a woman for that course. She thought the Head and Master thing was stupid.

We did have a lot of “Oh, you can't sit here, sweetie, this is where members of the bar sit” or “You must be the court reporter because you have a briefcase.” But it wasn't nasty. It was funny, silly, and everybody was polite.

The daughter of a friend of mine who works here told me this story: She has a son who's 10 and a daughter who's about 8. They came out one morning and there's a landscaping crew working in the front yard. “Look at that, Mom, all the landscapers out there, they're all girls.” And [the friend] said, “Yeah, they are, because women can do what men can do, and everybody chooses their own way to make a living.” And her daughter piped up and said, “Mom, did you know guys can be lawyers, too?” Because that little girl—her mother and the mothers of all her playmates are all lawyers!

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Kathleen A. Manning