

Stratton Profiled in Ohio State Alumni Magazine Story Titled “Called to Connect”

Related Attorneys

Evelyn Lundberg Stratton

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Eve Stratton, of counsel in the Vorys Columbus office who prior to joining Vorys was a justice on the Supreme Court of Ohio, was recently featured in the Summer 2018 edition of *Ohio State Alumni Magazine*. The article, which was titled *Called to Connect*, focused on Stratton’s work on mental health and how the criminal justice system can better address individuals with mental health issues.

The story states:

“Thom Craig has spoken alongside Stratton more than 40 times since Stepping Up launched in 2015. She has met him each time with a warm greeting, and she listens intently to his speech as if she’s never heard of this topic before. Stratton first felt a calling to advocate for people with mental illness —many of them juveniles and veterans — as a trial judge. In seven years on the Franklin County Common Pleas Court bench, she saw many of the same individuals recycle through on charges. Instead of falling prey to cynicism, the self-described ‘doer’ sought system reform through collaboration. As director of the mental health program for Peg’s Foundation, a sponsor of the privately funded Stepping Up Initiative of Ohio, Craig has never seen a hint of negativity in Stratton.

‘She always sees a way,’ he says. ‘Maybe that’s because she’s seen so much.’”

The story also states:

*“Stratton also showed ferocious determination while breaking into the male-dominated field of law. She applied for numerous jobs in her first six months after graduation. No, she kept being told. ‘I kept interviewing and interviewing because I loved it, and I knew I’d be good at it,’ says Stratton, who eventually was hired by a small Columbus law firm. She took cues from the book *Dress for Success*, plowed hours into cases, impressed others in the courtroom with her preparation and networked persistently, even*

with adversaries. She wanted to be a judge by age 50. 'There's no explanation why, other than it was my calling,' Stratton says. 'It just felt like that was what I was supposed to do with my life.' In 1989, she became the first woman elected to Franklin County Common Pleas Court. She was 34.

'To some extent, she got tested by the lawyers because of her youth,' says Michael Close '67, a fellow Republican elected to the same court that year. 'Eve had to be tough. She had to learn when she had to make the calls and when she could bend. She did a fine job.'"

Stratton learned how to get things done, sometimes enlisting Close to introduce her ideas about court administration so there'd be less pushback from older, male judges. This woman prosecutors dubbed 'The Velvet Hammer' for her tough sentencing in white-collar crime cases wasn't afraid to do what she thought necessary. She never buckled under her workload, which grew like spring weeds after Gov. George Voinovich appointed her to the Ohio Supreme Court in 1996. She later earned three six-year terms from voters. Dave Smith, her friend and volunteer driver for nearly 30 years, removed a bench seat from the back of his black Chevy van and installed a countertop desk so she could read legal briefs and write on the road. 'We'd go to a campaign dinner or fundraiser in Cleveland or Akron or wherever and she'd get back in the van at 10 o'clock at night,' Smith recalls. 'She'd take a 5- or 10-minute nap, and then she'd get up, turn the lights on and work the rest of the drive home. It didn't matter what time of night it was, she'd work.'"

To read the entire profile, visit the *Ohio State Alumni Magazine* [website](#).