

Lifetime Achievement

Town Justice Sybil Kennedy was born in Rhode Island and moved to Buffalo in 1955. She married James P. Kennedy and they moved to Grand Island in 1960. She is a graduate of Bryant & Stratton Business Institute and attended the University of Buffalo, Millard Fillmore College.

Her career in law began in 1955 when Francis "Bud" Pritchard and Edward W. Kinney formed a law partnership and asked her to become their legal assistant. From 1955 through 2017, she worked for Judge Pritchard and the other attorneys with whom he became associated during those years, including her daughter Deborah Kennedy-Rogoza, following Debbie's formation of Pritchard & Kennedy with Bud in 1988.

In 1970, Sybil was asked to help out "for a few weeks" in the Grand Island Court and she went on to hold the position of Chief Clerk of the Court for over 30 years. While holding such a position, she was asked by the Office of the Court Administration to be a lecturer and she traveled around New York State teaching newly-elected judges and court clerks practices and procedures in town and village courts. She also served on Local Court Advisory Committee and the Judicial Agency Coordinating Committee. Sybil, along with ten other clerks, decided that it was important for all clerks to be properly trained, so they founded the New York State Association of Magistrates Court Clerks, which today has a membership of over 1500 clerks. She served as Conference Chairman until 2000. She was named NYS Court Clerk of the Year in 1984 and Citizen of the Year in Government by the Grand Island Chamber of Commerce in 1978. She was also Grand Island's first Marriage Officer.

In 2000 she decided to run for Town Justice, was the first woman to be elected Town Justice on Grand Island, and when she retires this year, she will have served Grand Island for fifty years. As judge, her mission has been to help those addicted and those who suffer from domestic violence. She instituted a "First Time Last Time" problem solving program in hope of early intervention. She was appointed by the NYS Office of Court Administration and served on committees formed to set up domestic violence programs that are used throughout the state.

Sybil is the proud mother of two children, Deborah Kennedy-Rogoza an attorney on Grand Island, and J.P. Kennedy, Jr., the US Attorney for the Western District of NY. Her grandchildren Randy, Lauren and Kevin Rogoza, Bridget and Jack Kennedy are the loves of her life.

She is a member of the Erie County and NYS Association of Magistrates, the Grand Island Chamber of Commerce, St. Stephen's Church, a past President and member of the Grand Island Zonta Club and a Director of the Board of Directors of Sponsors of the US Navy, having christened a minesweeper, the US Heroic, during World War II, which was built in a shipyard owned by her father and grandfather.

In addition to serving Grand Island through her work in the Court, over the years Sybil has been active at times in the PTA, Girls Scouts, Junior Football, the Chamber of Commerce, Church Council, Zonta and while her husband was alive, she worked each year at the Lion's annual Spaghetti Dinner and Handicapped Children's Picnic. Missing the patriotic Fourth of July Celebrations enjoyed during her childhood in New England, Sybil was involved in Grand Island's first annual Independence Parade and she went on to organize and run the parade with Teddy Filosofos for many years.