

Period

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tends to make people run out and buy guns. If there is a high-profile crime or mass murder, there is a little hysteria and people will buy guns."

In 1989, when stricter gun safety laws and restrictions were before legislators, both in Washington and Lansing, there were 93,008 new gun permits issued in Michigan. That figure slipped to 85,054 in 1990 and 84,229 in 1991, she said.

To obtain a handgun in Farmington Hills, the applicant must be a resident over the age of 18, a U.S. citizen and have no felony convictions. A written test is given, and police run a background check of the applicant. The applicant must buy the weapon within 10 days of picking up the permit to purchase and then register the gun.

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Schaefer and her sisters after his wife's death.

"I was 11 when my mother died. My father raised us during the depression and never made us feel that there was any limitation on what we could do."

And for the most part, the Redford High School graduate did not encounter as many obstacles as she did a "climate" where women were expected to stay in the home.

Schaefer, who graduated from U-M law school in 1945, said her sister's attempts to find legal work after the war were met with some resistance.

"They said, 'We were hiring women, but the war's over.'

And in the 1940s, a woman planning a career could face some social handicaps. For that reason, Schaefer wouldn't exactly brag about her plans for a legal career.

"I'd say I was in graduate school because I was afraid boys wouldn't date me."

Fortunately, Schaefer began her career at a firm where her sex was not a barrier; her father, Elmer H. Groesma, hired her in 1946. She also worked with the Detroit firm of Markle & Markle for 21 years before then-Gov. William Milliken appointed her to the Workers Compensation Appeal Board.

In addition, she has compiled an impressive record of public service, including a term on the Farmington Hills City Council and the Michigan Metro Girl Scout Council Board.

Some trying times

One of the most memorable cases to come before Judge Schaefer involved prostitution at "health spas" about five years ago, she said. Schaefer said five Korean women were convicted after a five-day jury trial where one of the chief obstacles involved translation.

"Some of them could not speak English," she said. "It was a difficult case to try. I felt sorry for some of the women, because they were being exploited."

Another incident is a reminder that judges make decisions that can involve considerable personal risk.

"About 10 years ago there was a prelude for an armed robbery," she said. "He (defendant) threatened to get the judge and the police. He escaped that night."

The judge said the man was captured two weeks later, but she took his threat seriously.

For the past 10 years, Schaefer, 73, whose husband Marvin is a retired electrical engineer, has four children. The idea of seeing more of her children — two — and doing more traveling, entertaining and gardening has become more attractive.

"I'm looking forward to it," she said.

View from the bench

There will be problems for new Judge Martha Parker, including a large docket, sometimes made worse in cases where plea bargaining is restricted or not allowed.

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