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Alumni Profile

Beth Rogers Thompson

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Nursing alumna nurtures children, families facing cancer

Just when Judge Sandra Thompson ‘68 thinks she’s heard it all, a defendant insists she had to steal a scarf to wear to church. The judge is unmoved. Thompson knows what it’s like to lack money to buy what you want — or to pay your court fine. “I give people a year to pay their fine, and I’ll make special arrangements if they don’t have the money, including community service. But I expect them to fulfill their obligations,” she said.

In the 1960s Thompson chose Linfield from the National Scholarship Service and Fund for Negro Students matched her with, based on her SAT scores and personal information. But after three years, the financial aid ended and she couldn’t afford to stay. Thompson withdrew from Linfield and went home to Sonoma, Calif.

Family friends provided a private scholarship, enabling her to receive her B.A. in political science from the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1969.

“Each time I have encountered some obstacle in my life, there has been some blessing to help me get over it.”

— Judge Sandra Thompson ‘68

been some blessing to help me get over it,” she says.

Her Linfield days were not over; she now serves on the college’s Board of Trustees and chairs the committee on student affairs.

Thompson, who earned her law degree from the University of Michigan in 1972, was appointed to the South Bay, Calif., Municipal Court in 1984 by then-Gov. George Deukmejian and was elevated to Los Angeles Superior Court when the courts were unified in 2000.


She also served as president of the National Association of Women Judges in 2005.

Thompson, who hears misdemeanor criminal cases, didn’t always want to be a judge. “I wanted to be an actress or a singer, but I felt I was not good enough to make people stop eating their ice cream cones,” she said. As a Linfield student, she appeared in the play No Strings.

She describes herself as “an inveterate theater-goer.” One of her favorite plays, which she saw again recently, is Twelve Angry Men, about a jury.

The seeds of her judicial career were planted in high school. She presided over student court hearings on infractions such as smoking and wearing open-toed shoes without nylons. The adviser encouraged her to consider becoming a judge. Thompson had no idea at the time that she would have to become a lawyer first.

She worked as an Inglewood city attorney and a Los Angeles County deputy district attorney before her judicial appointment.

Prosecutor Joan Jenkens says it’s a pleasure to try a case before Thompson. “She’s always prepared. She’s fair to both sides and goes out of her way to make the jury feel respected and important. She’s so respectful of everyone. … And she knows the law like a son-of-a-gun.”

— Beth Rogers Thompson

Ruling with respect

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Friends and family

Steven Toussaint of Lake Oswego, May 26, 2006. He was a former nursing professor. Survivor include his wife, Christine (Benson) ’92, and his daughter, Colby ’97.

Thomson, 88, of Portland, March 15. Survivors include his wife, Myrtle (Miller) ’76 and daughters, Brandi ’83 and Dixie (Alcorn) ’61.

Clyde Woods ’41 of Portland, April 10. Survivors include his wife, Dorothy; Donald ‘64.


Marni Allen ’96 spends her days surrounded by the laughter and smiles of children. Ironically, most are fighting cancer.

Linfield’s own Marni Allen ’96 knows what it’s like to lack money to buy what you want. Allen is constantly amazed by the resiliency of children.

Allen was instrumental in securing a federal grant for nurses, the Greater Awareness for Nurses Fund (GAIN) grant. As lead author of the proposal, she was responsible for course development and implementation at every nursing school in Idaho. She remains a consultant on the program.

“I really like to finish what I start,” said Allen, who emerged from Linfield with a strong sense of professional responsibility.

She is past president and a board member of the Idaho Nurses Association, where she advocates for nursing issues and lobbied on Capitol Hill on behalf of safe nursing practices. She is also a strong proponent of Camp Rainbow Gold, an American Cancer Society camp.

Allen saw her Linfield experience prepared her in all aspects of her professional life.

“My education here was a dream come true. I feel blessed to be here,” she said. “It’s the hard work and the people that have prepared me for the journey.”

Allen got a glimpse of her future while still a Linfield student, working at Legacy Cancer Services. With her degree in hand, she began a four-year stint with Legacy Health System at Meridian Park Hospital on the oncology unit and at Legacy Cancer Services providing cancer prevention and early detection services to the community.

After earning a master’s degree at the University of Portland, Allen joined the faculty at Boise State University, stepping away from oncology to fulfill a lifetime aspiration to teach. She integrated her passion for culture and diversity into her lessons and taught nursing students to consider the cultural aspects that might influence patient care.

“It goes beyond making sure a professional interpreter is available,” she said. “It’s learning from a cultural standpoint what is important to a client and meeting those needs.”