

PROFESSOR PATRICIA HASSETT PIONEER IN INTERNATIONAL AND COMPARATIVE LAW, TECHNOLOGY AND LAW, AND THE LEGAL PROFESSION

Elizabeth A. Stawicki, JD*

This article provides an in-depth profile of an overlooked pioneer who was among the first women law professors at Syracuse University and who forged new paths in international and comparative law, technology and law, and women in the legal profession—Patricia Hassett. It begins with her roots in Elmira, N.Y., and goes on to detail her career as a woman of “firsts” in starting as the first female Chemung County attorney to being among the first women law faculty at Syracuse University. The article then goes on to explain her prescient thinking in using electronic data to improve the administration of justice not only in the U.S., but also abroad, most notably in the U.K., where she also became a barrister.

INTRODUCTION

It was a great honor to receive the inaugural Patricia Hassett Legal Fellowship at Syracuse University, and so I wanted to learn more about this pioneer—her career as an attorney, academic, and her teaching philosophy. Unfortunately, she passed away in July 2009 so I could not interview her, but through her writing, research, and the people who knew her, I came to learn that Professor Hassett was an overlooked trailblazer whose prescient thinking served as the basis for national and international trends in law and technology.

* Elizabeth A. Stawicki, JD, General Counsel, Minnesota Office of Administrative Hearings and former Syracuse University Patricia Hassett Legal Fellow. As a radio legal correspondent, recipient of two American Bar Association Silver Gavel. Recipient of a Knight-Wallace fellowship at the University of Michigan, JD from the University of St. Thomas, Minneapolis, and B.A. in journalism, University of Minnesota. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the Syracuse University College of Law Librarians, especially Jan Fleckenstein, Teaching Professor and Director, Robert J. Weiner Jr., Electronic Services, and Sidney A. Lanier, Catalog and Archives. I would also like to thank Bill Catlin who edited earlier drafts of this article and Syracuse University College of Law Professor Christian C. Day for his guidance and support.

I. GROWING UP IN ELMIRA, NY

Patricia Hassett grew up in Elmira, New York, with her three siblings. Her father and grandfather were prominent business and civic leaders in Elmira.¹ “They were businessmen who happened to be lawyers,” said Hassett’s sister, Karen Meyer. “They got their law degrees to help run their businesses.” Hassett’s grandfather insisted that all his children, boys and girls alike, go to college, according to Meyer. At the beginning of the 20th century, it was unusual for women to pursue higher education. But the imperative to attend college was passed down to the next generation and it was taken for granted that Patricia and her siblings would pursue Bachelors’ degrees and even beyond.² Hassett majored in philosophy at Elmira College. She did not place well there so she decided to take the legal entrance exam and discovered that if philosophy was not a good fit, the law was. She excelled on the entrance exam and decided to pursue law at Syracuse University. Hassett would later tell the *Elmira Star-Gazette* on June 23, 1966, that while some of her family and friends tried to “steer her away from the law field,” her father did not. “He always told me that I could do anything I wanted, with his blessing, if I could give him a reasonable basis for my action,” she said.³

Having a reasonable basis for action would be a concept that she would later employ to improve the administration of the legal system.

II. SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF LAW AND BREAKING GROUND

A. TRAILBLAZER FOR WOMEN IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION

Hassett was the only woman in the class of Syracuse University College of Law in 1963. That year, women made up only 4% of first year law students in the United States.⁴ Hassett worked on the Law Review and graduated in 1966 only to find that law firms in the area did not want

¹ *J. John Hassett Jr. Dies at 53; City Business, Civic Leader*, *Elmira Star-Gazette*, July 29, 1965.

² Virtual Interview with Karen Meyer (May 31, 2022).

³ Peggy Gallagher, *Woman Assistant DA Will Be “Just One of the Club”*, *ELMIRA STAR-GAZETTE* (June 23, 1966).

⁴ By 1973, the percentage of women entering law school had risen to 20%; in 2021, that percentage was 55.3%, *Women in the Legal Profession*, American Bar Association Profile of the Legal Profession (Feb 8, 2023), available at <https://www.abalegalprofile.com/women.php#anchor3>.

to hire her. “She did apply to some firms in Elmira, but they weren’t interested,” said Meyer. “None of the firms had a female on their staff—female partner, female associate.”⁵ But the local county attorney’s office did hire Hassett, and she served as the first woman assistant district attorney in Chemung County. She was a prosecutor but also enjoyed appellate work, arguing before the New York Court of Appeals in Albany. Yet obtaining the position did not mean she received the respect that should have gone with the position. In her 1966 interview with the *Elmira Star-Gazette*, she recounted calling the state Court of Appeals for a document. She identified herself on the call as, “Patricia Hassett, Assistant District Attorney of Chemung County.” The clerk replied: “I doubt it.”⁶

B. THE CALLS TO TEACH

After a few years in government, Hassett felt called to teach. She found similarities between appellate work and teaching—preparing presentations and being flexible enough to field questions.⁷ To obtain a teaching position, Hassett felt she needed to pursue a Master of Laws degree from Harvard, which she completed. Soon after, the Dean of West Virginia’s College of Law called her “out of the blue” and offered her an assistant professor position. She accepted, and in 1973, she became the first woman law professor at West Virginia University College of Law.⁸

During the 1960s and early 1970s, a wave of activism in the women’s rights movement was underway.⁹ Laws were catching up as well, particularly in higher education. Patterned after the Civil Rights

⁵ Virtual Interview with Karen Meyer (May 31, 2022).

⁶ Peggy Gallagher, *Woman Assistant DA Will Be “Just One of the Club”*, ELMIRA STAR-GAZETTE (June 23, 1966).

⁷ Mickey Maher, *Interview with Professor Patricia Hassett*, *The Judge*, College of Law, Syracuse University, Vol. 16, no. 1 (Jan. 19, 1981).

⁸ E-mail from Jennie L. James, Assistant Dean for Development, West Virginia University College of Law to Elizabeth A. Stawicki, Esq., Patricia Hassett Legal Fellow, Syracuse University (May 26, 2022).

⁹ The Women’s Rights Movement in the United States began with a convention at the Wesleyan Chapel in Seneca Falls, N.Y. (about 60 miles from Hassett’s home in Elmira, N.Y.) on July 19–20, 1848. One hundred attendees signed the “Declaration of Sentiments,” a document drafted primarily by Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Stanton patterned the Declaration of Sentiments after the Declaration of Independence with some notable additions. For example, The Declaration of Sentiments read, “We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men and women are created equal...” Women’s Rights National Historical Park, N.Y., (Feb. 8, 2023), *available at* <https://www.nps.gov/wori/learn/historyculture/declaration-of-sentiments.htm>.

Act of 1964,¹⁰ Congress enacted Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which specifically barred gender discrimination in education programs that receive federal funding.¹¹ Title IX is generally associated with equality in athletics, but the law is much broader in scope; It specifically bars sex discrimination in higher education, including employment.¹² Following two years at the West Virginia University College of Law, Hassett accepted a visiting teaching position at her alma mater, Syracuse University, with the idea that if it went well, she would stay on. It did. While some publications have reported that Hassett was the first woman law professor at Syracuse University, she was among the first four women who started in 1974.¹³ Hassett's colleague at the College of Law, Professor Daan Braveman, said teaching at Syracuse could not have been easy for her at the time. The College of Law was a male-dominated organization from the student body to the faculty. In addition, most of her colleagues had known her as a student, not a peer. "And then she's teaching there with people who were her professors,"

¹⁰ Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d, "[N]o person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

¹¹ "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance" 20 U.S.C. § 1681(a).

¹² "Although civil rights laws in the 1960s barred discrimination in employment, it was not until Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 that these protections were extended to students and faculty by prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities receiving any federal financial assistance," *Gender Issues: Women's Participation in the Sciences Has Increased, but Agencies Need to Do More to Ensure Compliance with Title IX*, U.S. Government Accountability Office (July 22, 2004), (Feb 8, 2023), available at <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-04-639>.

¹³ Judith Younger was nominated for the Deanship in February 1974 and appointed to that position effective July 1974. In addition to Patricia Hassett, Syracuse University College of Law appointed three other women to faculty positions effective September 1974: Judith Koffler (assistant professor), Lois R. Goodman (assistant professor), and Barbara Rowan (adjunct professor), E-mail from Vanessa St.Oegger-Menn University Archivist, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University to Elizabeth A. Stawicki, Esq., Patricia Hassett Legal Fellow, Syracuse University (June 7, 2022).

Braveman said. "It's really an awkward thing. She handled it quite well; she was very devoted to the students."¹⁴

Devotion to students was important to Hassett. Her sister said Hassett's teaching philosophy was to respect her students as she guided them through the law. Hassett did not believe in browbeating them or demonstrating how much more intelligent she was. Nonetheless she still had higher standards for them. Meyer said her sister viewed them not only as students, but also as soon-to-be lawyers who would be advising clients on profoundly important matters. "Patricia would say, 'you're sending them out into the world to deal with other people's lives, and they need to be prepared and to do a proper job,'" said Meyer.¹⁵ By 1978, as an Associate Professor, Hassett was already a reporter for the Standards for Discovery and Standards for Joinder and Severance of the American Bar Association project to revise its standards for criminal justice.¹⁶

Over the years, the Syracuse University College of Law became Hassett's second home. She valued and collected information, so much so, that her colleagues described her office as stacked floor to ceiling with papers and boxes. She had additional bookcases installed; she even subdivided her office to make a kind of a mini library for herself. In a 1981 interview with the law school newspaper, Hassett said she closely followed her father's advice, "waste not, want not," a quote she proudly displayed in her office on a polished block of anthracite coal. The coal, like the quote, the article said, "had special meaning as it reminds her of her father, who began operating his own coal business at age sixteen, the proceeds of which financed his own Harvard Law education and supported the family for many years."¹⁷ With the advent of the Internet in the late 1980s and 1990s, Hassett's penchant for collecting would expand beyond books and papers to electronic data.

¹⁴ Virtual Interview with Daan Braveman, Sr. Higher Education Counsel, Harter, Secrest and Emery; and President Emeritus, Nazareth College (Apr. 30, 2022).

¹⁵ Virtual Interview with Karen Meyer (May 31, 2022).

¹⁶ American Bar Association, *Joinder and Severance*, (Aug. 9, 1978), (Feb. 8, 2023), available at

https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/publications/criminal_justice_standards/joinder-severance-2nd-ed.pdf.

¹⁷ Mickey Maher, *Interview with Professor Patricia Hassett*, *The Judge*, College of Law, Syracuse University, Vol. 16, no. 1 (Jan. 19, 1981).

C. HASSETT'S INTEREST IN ELECTRONIC DATA AND IMPROVING JUSTICE

Syracuse University College of Law Electronic Services Librarian Robert Weiner Jr. remembers Hassett wanting to learn and always curious, particularly about data collection and the law.¹⁸ Weiner says Hassett was a regular at the library's training sessions on new legal databases and research, which he said was unusual for law school professors at the time. "That was really the interesting thing about Patricia, because way back, when I first started, a lot of the faculty who had been around for a while didn't want to hear about the databases," said Weiner.¹⁹

And further, Hassett thought about using electronic data as a basis to determine how judges were applying the law, according to Gary Kelder, Syracuse University Professor of Law. "What Patricia wanted to know was, how are sentences being meted out and the same thing with bail determinations." Kelder said during the 1980's and 1990's, there was a large push for law school faculty to engage in interdisciplinary research and to reform criminal sentencing.²⁰

"On the federal level, we created these federal sentencing guidelines, which now everybody likes to criticize. But the point was, the effort was made to eliminate disparities, the amount of time that you had to spend incarcerated shouldn't depend on where you got convicted, or who your judge was, etc. so let's create an even playing field and Patricia was a forerunner for a lot of that with her research."²¹

In 1986, Hassett spent much of the year conducting comparative research on repeat criminal offenders in England, the U.S., and China.²²

¹⁸ Hassett organized conferences on data gathering research and was co-founder of the French American Conference on Law and Artificial Intelligence. Robert J. Weiner Jr., Electronic Services Librarian, Syracuse University, also participated in the group. One of the organization's conferences was canceled because of 9/11 but papers as part of that conference were published in the *Syracuse Law Review*.

¹⁹ Virtual Interview with Robert J. Weiner Jr., Electronic Services Librarian, Syracuse University (April 13, 2022).

²⁰ Hassett was also a reporter for the American Bar Association Standing Committee on Criminal Justice, *Syndicus*, Vol. 25, No. 1, Fall 1982.

²¹ Interview with Gary T. Kelder, Professor, Syracuse University College of Law, in Syracuse, N.Y. (April 21, 2022).

²² The research was funded by the Syracuse University Senate Research and Equipment Fund and the College of Law Center for Interdisciplinary Studies, *Syndicus*, Vol. 26, No. 3, Spring 1986.

III. HASSETT IN LONDON

A. SYRACUSE COLLEGE OF LAW EXPERIMENT

In 1989, Syracuse University was looking at the possibility of teaching law at the undergraduate level and decided to try out the project in the undergraduate program in London.²³ “The program was not carried back to Syracuse....[but] I made a lot of contacts all over England who were doing exciting work in legal education,” Hassett said.²⁴ Hassett also began to co-lead the London program, a summer externship program where Syracuse law students spend seven weeks in London working at law firms and government agencies.²⁵ One of the key parts of the job is to “play matchmaker” to pair British legal mentors with Syracuse law students. Hassett took it as a personal challenge to find the right slot for students and she was good at it. As a first-year law student, James Bergeron learned Constitutional Law from Hassett, but he later went on to co-lead the London externship program with her for several years. When he arrived in London, he was taken aback at how comfortable and well-connected she was in the U.K. Bergeron is now Political Advisor to Commander, NATO Allied Maritime Command in Northwood U.K.

“Patricia was inside the British mind. She knew how to operate within the British legal system. She was never misunderstood. My sense is she dramatically escalated the reach of the Syracuse program during those years.”²⁶

Hassett was in London when sweeping U.K. legal reforms were underway following an Act of Parliament known as the *Courts and Legal Services Act of 1990*.²⁷ Towards the end of Margaret Thatcher’s time as Prime Minister in 1989, the government minister of legal affairs proposed

²³ *Syracuse Yankee in Queen Elizabeth’s Court*, Syndicus, Vol. 31, No. 2, Spring 1992.

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ For a description of the *LondonEx* program (Feb. 8, 2023), available at <http://law.syr.edu/academics/clinical-experiential/externships/law-in-london/>.

²⁶ Virtual Interview with James H. Bergeron, Political Advisor to Commander, NATO Allied Maritime Command in Northwood, U.K. (June 30, 2022).

²⁷ In a detailed historical context of the *Courts and Legal Services Act of 1990*, scholar Michael Zander wrote that the British Government’s exercise in reforming the legal profession represented “one of the most extraordinary and fascinating episodes in the long history of the profession,” *The Thatcher Government’s Onslaught on the Lawyers: Who Won?*, 24 *Int’l Law.* 753 (1990), (Feb. 8, 2023), available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40706452>.

to eliminate the separation between the roles of barristers and solicitors.²⁸ In 1991, Hassett was an International Visiting Fellow at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies in London. At the end of that fellowship, the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Legal Education and Conduct recruited Hassett to serve as a member of the Secretariat, advising on the education and professional conduct of persons providing legal services.²⁹ Hassett was "called" to the Bar of England and Wales in 1992 and made a barrister and became a member of the professional organization for barristers, the General Council of the Bar, and her Inn (Inner Temple).³⁰

B. USING EXPERT SYSTEMS TO IMPROVE BAIL DECISIONS

Syracuse University College of Law Professor Christian Day said just like in the U.S., Hassett brought her passion for judicial equity to England where she became involved in criminal justice and aspects of bail reform at a time when similar cases were resulting in very different judicial decisions. "She was very interested in making certain that burglars were pretty much treated the same way in London as they were in Manchester," he said.³¹

Her research was attracting international attention.³² Hassett wrote, "In England, an accused has a statutory right to release pending trial unless there are substantial grounds for believing that the accused will flee, commit another offence, or interfere with witnesses."³³ The

²⁸ Maimon Schwarzchild, *Class, National Character, and the Bar Reforms in Britain: Will There Always Be an England?*, 9 Conn. J. Int'l L. 185 (1994).

²⁹ Hassett was a member of the Secretariat of the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Legal Education and Conduct in 1992-1993, (Feb. 8, 2023), available at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/235677/0811.pdf.

³⁰ Hassett donated many of the books that she brought back from England, as well as her barrister's wig to Syracuse University's College of Law Library.

³¹ Telephone Interview with Christian C. Day, Professor, Syracuse University College of Law (June 1, 2022).

³² While in the U.K., Hassett presented papers about law and artificial intelligence, which included, "*Problems in Selecting Effective Computer Technology for Use in the Bail Stage of the Criminal Justice System*" at the 2nd annual conference on Law, Computer and Artificial Intelligence, which was held at the University of Exeter in Exeter, England. While in Exeter, Hassett also moderated program sessions on the admissibility of evidence from computers.

³³ Patricia Hassett, *Can Expert System Technology Contribute to Improved Bail Decisions?* International Journal of Law and Information Technology, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1993). "Offence" is the British spelling for "offense."

problem, according to Hassett, was a vague standard, which had no objective and valid criteria for meeting the standard and decision-makers were not required to explain their rationales.³⁴ Hassett wrote that the decision to detain an accused was often made in less than five minutes and may appear in the courtroom to be trivial. But the decision to detain “is never trivial to the accused who inevitably suffers a variety of adverse consequences,” she wrote.³⁵ One of the most troubling consequences, Hassett found, was a high correlation between pre-trial detention and the likelihood of conviction.³⁶

To that end, she envisioned an “expert system” to help judges make more consistent bail decisions to reduce unjustified detentions.³⁷ An expert system is a form of computer software, which attempts to use computer technology to mimic complex human thinking processes.³⁸ She and a colleague, Nigel Payne, created a prototype where the “assistant would provide a common set of consistently applied rules with the goal of having “like cases” treated alike.”³⁹ Syracuse University Teaching Professor and Director of the Law Library, Jan Fleckenstein said it’s important to remember this was 30 plus years ago.

Even the algorithms that we think of today, for good or ill, were not really developed in the era in which she was working on this, demonstrating at a theoretical level, how a well written program of questions could inject more fairness and less human bias into, for

³⁴ “[B]ail decision-makers are left to construct personal views based upon various blends of custom, anecdote, experience and idiosyncrasy; these personal views are rarely open to scrutiny. Not surprisingly, a case seen by one decision maker as meeting the ‘substantial grounds to believe’ standard may strike another judge differently.” *Id.* at 152.

³⁵ These consequences include: loss of personal liberty and separation from family and friends. *Id.* at 146.

³⁶ These factors included: an incentive to plead guilty, difficulty in helping to prepare a defense, and the “taint of custody.” Patricia Hassett, *Can Expert System Technology Contribute to Improved Bail Decisions?* *International Journal of Law and Information Technology*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1993).

³⁷ *Id.* at 146.

³⁸ Patricia Hassett, *Can Expert System Technology Contribute to Improved Bail Decisions?* *International Journal of Law and Information Technology*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1993).

³⁹ Patricia Hassett., *A Prototype Expert System for Making Bail Recommendations*, 7th BILETA Conference Information Technology and Legal Education: Towards 2000, British and Irish Legal Education Technology Association, British and Irish Legal Education Technology Association (1992).

example, an intake process for a client or in interactions between court personnel and a criminal defendant.⁴⁰

Nonetheless, while Hassett saw potential in using expert systems in law, she also advised caution, that such a system would need much field testing, that the implications of a role for computer technology in judicial decision[s] remains an open and vital question. "It need[s] careful exploration, Hassett wrote, before computers are endorsed for judicial tasks, particularly tasks involving a potential deprivation of personal freedom or the exercise of judicial discretion."⁴¹

Hassett would later serve as a consultant to the Research and Planning Unit of the London Home Office as part of the *Bail Process Project*, a package of measures that the British Government announced in 1992 to improve "quality, accuracy, and timeliness of the information" judges received to assess whether an accused would offend while out on bail.⁴² Hassett authored one of the sections of a major research report for Department Ministers, Parliament, and the public that explored magistrates' views on the information they needed and how they would use it.⁴³

C. BRINGING THE WORLD TO SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

Hassett's international contacts brought world-class conferences on artificial intelligence and law to Syracuse. Her contacts included the head of the French Government's Laboratory for Artificial Intelligence and the Law, Dr. Danielle Bourcier, with whom Hassett would collaborate in years to come.⁴⁴ In 1997, Hassett co-hosted a conference

⁴⁰ Virtual Interview with Jan Fleckenstein, Teaching Professor & Director of the Law Library, Syracuse University (May 27, 2022).

⁴¹ Patricia Hassett, *Can Expert System Technology Contribute to Improved Bail Decisions?* International Journal of Law and Information Technology, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1993).

⁴² *Remand Decisions and Offending on Bail: Evaluation of the Bail Process Project*, Home Office Research Study 184, Home Office Research and Statistics Directorate, London (1998). The Research and Statistics Directorate serves Department Ministers, Parliament, and the public through research, development, and statistics. "Information from the sources informs policy development and the management of programmes; their dissemination improves wider public understanding of matters of Home Office Concern."

⁴³ *Id.*

⁴⁴ Patricia Hassett, Danièle Bourcier, and Christophe Roquilly, *Law and Artificial Intelligence: A Revolution in Legal Knowledge in Droit et Intelligence artificielle: Une Révolution de la Connaissance Juridique* 17 (2000). Patricia Hassett and Danièle Bourcier, *Systèmes experts français et américains: Technologies de*

at Syracuse University with the Université de Paris 1 (Pantheon Sorbonne) to introduce practical applications of artificial intelligence to members of the legal profession.⁴⁵ What was unique about the conference was that while artificial intelligence meetings usually consisted of computer experts talking to other computer experts, this conference also conducted tutorials and demonstrations that showed attorneys how they could apply a legal expert system to their practices.⁴⁶

The following year, Hassett co-chaired, and the College of Law co-sponsored, the French American Conference on Law and Artificial Intelligence in Paris. The conference goal was to bridge the gap between lawyers and developers of legal expert systems, and contrast how legal and cultural differences between the French civil law system and how the American common law system impact intelligent computer systems and legal services.⁴⁷ In 2001, Hassett was again back in England to co-lead the Syracuse University College of Law summer program in London. She also organized the French American Conference on Law and Artificial Intelligence to take place later that year but was canceled due to the September 11th attacks.⁴⁸

D. TRANSACTIONAL RECORDS ACCESS CLEARINGHOUSE

At the same time, Hassett became interested in the work of the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC), an interdisciplinary research center at Syracuse University, which used the Freedom of Information Act to gather federal government data.⁴⁹ Linda Roberge, Syracuse University School of Management Research Professor and senior research fellow at TRAC worked with Hassett and led her through the applications of TRAC's TRACFED Data Warehouse, which collected federal data including data on federal judges. And while

l'information et spécificités culturelles in Droit et Intelligence artificielle: Une Révolution de la Connaissance Juridique 210 (2000).

⁴⁵ *Conference Bridges the Gap Between Lawyers and Builders of Legal Expert Systems*, Syndicus, Spring 1997.

⁴⁶ *Id.*

⁴⁷ Syndicus, Summer 1998.

⁴⁸ Although the conference did not take place, the participants contributed their prepared papers, which were later published in the *Syracuse Law Review*. Danièle Bourcier, Harold Burstyn, Patricia Hassett, and Christophe Roquilly, *Introduction to the Symposium on Technology and Legal Practice*, 52 *Syracuse L. Rev.* 979 (2002).

⁴⁹ Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, Syracuse University, (Feb. 8, 2023), available at <https://trac.syr.edu>.

Hassett did not get into the nitty gritty of data analysis, Roberge said, Hassett was thinking about how it could help lawyers better understand the specific court systems in which they were practicing.

“I think she was just a very innovative thinker. I certainly had not met many other lawyers that, I hate the phrase, were, ‘thinking outside of the box.’ She was willing to just imagine things that other people just weren't capable of.”⁵⁰

An article Roberge and Hassett published in 2002, said that to be a successful lawyer in a particular case, one needs to know how that specific court operates and the individual judges in it. Lawyers who work in a specific court system regularly can have an advantage because they know how individual judges have operated in the past. They may be able to answer the question, “Do cases really move more slowly through Judge Smith’s court?” One can only know that with actual data.⁵¹ For attorneys and other legal researchers, this sounds like today’s litigation data analytics, which now exists on legal databases as a tool for practitioners to understand, among other things, how quickly a case moves through a particular judge’s court.

Hassett retired with professor emerita status. According to the Dedication in 2006, Hassett had plans to retire to San Diego, but it was not to be. Hassett died at age 68 on July 10, 2009.

Elizabeth A. Stawicki, JD
Patricia Hassett Legal Fellow

⁵⁰ Virtual Interview with Linda Roberge, Research Professor, Martin J. Whitman School of Management, Syracuse University (Mar. 16, 2022).

⁵¹ Patricia Hassett and Linda Roberge, *A Review of TRACFED: Lawyers Strike Gold Mining Government Data* (Feb. 8, 2023), available at <https://www.llrx.com/2002/10/features-a-review-of-tracfed-lawyers-strike-gold-mining-government-data/>.