Clay Ward: To kick things off today, we have the opening speaker from one of our co-founders, Ms. Elizabeth Langer.

She is a Rutgers alumna and one of the original founders of the Women's Rights Law Reporter. She worked closely with the original founder of the journal, who was then just a professor, Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Before coming to Rutgers Law, she worked with attorneys you might know, like Bill Kunstler and Leonard Wienglass, with whom she worked on defending the Chicago Seven. Upon graduation from law school, she worked as a legislative assistant to the Congresswoman Bella Abzug from New York, where she handled matters like the Nixon impeachment, women's issues, privacy and freedom law--which is quite important, especially right now. Six years later, she opened a solo practice and built on her work in women's rights, including domestic relations, sexual assault, employment, medical, and privacy issues--as well as just general civil rights. Another noteworthy detail about Ms. Langer is that, she remained active in the Women's bar of D.C., helping to create the cable-TV series *Behind Closed Doors*, which is focused on women's perspectives on domestic relations issues.

Before we turn it over to her, we just want to underscore that in the fifty-four years that the Women's Rights Law Reporter has existed, we have stood for intersectional and inclusive conversations about topics related to women's and gender rights issues.

We are very excited for everyone here to both listen and participate in this this event. And now, come on up, Ms. Langer.

Elizabeth Langer: I'm honored to be here after fifty-four years, when I entered Rutgers Law School. But I must say, today, there is an elephant in the room: we have an election on Tuesday.

I'm going to take you away from that elephant in the room just for a few minutes, because I want to give you a little taste of the history of the Women's Rights Law Reporter: the founding, and where the founders--the women who came together to make the Women's Rights Law Reporter--actually came from in terms of their position in society. It's essential to our power to understand our history.

In 1980, when my son Ben was five years old, he arrived home from the first grade one afternoon, looking sad and dejected.

“What's the matter?” I asked him, “Why so sad?”

He turned to me with a pained expression and said, “The teacher asked us what we want to be when we grow up.” He shook his head, five years old, “I don't know what I want to be.”

“Well,” I replied, attempting to confront the gravity of that situation with my best problem-solving skills, of course, learned at Rutgers Law School, “You could be a lawyer like your mother!”

A look of utter dismay crossed his face, “Oh, mom, a lawyer! That's for girls!”

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In the fall of 1970, Rutgers was affectionately known as the People's Electric Law School. After all, it was an era of power to the people, and there was a distinct aura of electricity in the air. Rutgers Law in Newark had been a cauldron of political activism in the late '60s. Our much beloved Dean Willard Heckel had invited Arthur Kinoy, a revered civil liberties lawyer with a national

reputation, to join the faculty in 1965. Many young civil rights activists followed Professor Kinoy to Rutgers.

In July 1967, an urban uprising broke out in Newark, led by the local Black community.[2] Newark was a majority-Black city controlled by white politicians. Racial profiling, redlining, and discrimination in employment and education all caused the city's minority residents to feel powerless and disenfranchised. The inner city was devastated that summer, and community organizer Tom Hayden, along with Newark attorney Leonard Wienglass, worked tirelessly to aid the local Black community in efforts to secure social justice.[3] Dean Heckel's response to the political unrest was to appoint a committee tasked with the creation of a law school Minority Student Program. This program was geared to the training of a new generation of indigenous, minority lawyers to serve the community.

In 1968, Rutgers Law was leading the nation's movement towards clinical education, having created the first large-scale, student-staffed clinical program.

Not without significant controversy among the faculty, the law school's reputation drew minority, progressive, and radical applicants. On campus, there was an active civil rights movement, an energetic anti-Vietnam War organization, and growing anti-President Richard Nixon sentiment among the student body and much of the faculty.

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Notably, among students in the United States, and abroad, too, these political events nearly eclipsed another, quieter movement that was percolating in 1970: the women's liberation movement. The emergence of this movement had been attributed in part, to the surprise international success of Betty Friedan's book *The Feminine Mystique*[4] Friedan, a housewife herself, described what she called “a problem with no name:” the constraints many women of her generation experienced in fulfilling the roles of mother and wife, and the dissatisfactions experienced by educated middle class women post-World War Two, who began to question whether the fault ***227** was with them or with society's expectations. The women's liberation movement embraced the notion that it was time to rewrite society's rules, and feminists campaigned against the social and political inequalities in an effort to end gender discrimination.

In 1970, the entering class at Rutgers Law was made up of an unprecedented 20% women.[5] It was said to be the highest in the United States. Once again, the People's Electric was ahead of the curve, and the exhilaration among the entering women students that year was palpable. In our minds, we had reached a milestone in the journey to a new world. By the way, the U.S. women in law school is last year up to 56% in 54 years.[6]

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Arriving at Rutgers Law in the fall of 1970, I took my place in an entering class of 320. More than 60 women were enrolled in that class, and for most of us it was difficult to determine whether the uneasiness we felt entering law school was greater than our sense of triumph or utter dread .... That year, there were two women tenure-track faculty members at Rutgers: Professors Eva Hanks and Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and two women on the clinical faculty: Professors Anna Mae Shepherd and Rita Bender. The remaining faculty members were male: many of whom appeared wholly unprepared for the sizable body of women law students entering the campus. The instructional banter from many of these men was sometimes crude and sometimes sexist ... [and

t]he atmosphere was not always welcoming. To ease my discomfort, I found a women's consciousness-raising group in Newark.

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At my first meeting, I was introduced to Anne Marie Boylan, a recent graduate of Rutgers Law School. Boylan spoke about her efforts to establish a new journal, the Women's Rights Law Reporter, in her tiny Newark apartment. The notion of a legal journal focused on women's issues was a novel and fairly radical idea. In fact, *228 it turned out to be the first in the United States. Boylan had managed to publish one issue but lacked the funds and the staff to keep it going.

To me, it made perfect sense that the journal should be brought to Rutgers Law School. A number of other law students agreed. Piece of cake, I thought. I quickly scheduled a meeting with Dean James Paul. After the meeting, I realized it would not be a piece of cake. The Rutgers administration was less than eager to embrace this new, financially troubled publication. And a law journal devoted to women's rights? What an absurd notion at that time. The journal didn't fit any of the existing categories of law journals. We were told that Rutgers would not provide funds, office space, or an affiliation with the law school. Our only hope for keeping the law reporter alive was to raise the needed funds ourselves, locate office space, and find a faculty advisor who was acceptable to the Dean. If these conditions were met, we were told, there was a chance Rutgers would allow publication of this fledgling journal.

Fortunately, our then-associate Dean Willard Heckel, was far more supportive. He urged us to move forward with our plan. There was more than enough interest among the women students to begin addressing the conditions imposed by the administration. We organized ourselves, and tasks were assigned. Dozens of fundraising letters were mailed out. We managed to secure a sizable grant from the Wallace-Eljabar Fund, and additional small grants from the Women's Division of the United Methodist Church, the Women's Center at Barnard College, and the Student Bar Association at Rutgers Law School. With the full support of Professor Anna Mae Shepherd, the Urban Legal clinic made space for the law reporter in an old building they occupied behind the main law school. We were, however, at a loss for a faculty advisor.

Someone suggested Professor Ginsburg. I didn't know her, but I made an appointment to see her. I imagined that we would need to make a really strong pitch. The role of faculty advisor involves a substantial amount of responsibility, oversight, and no small risk. At that point, the law reporter was more a concept than a publication. But much to my surprise, Professor Ginsburg immediately agreed to take it on.

*An Advisory Board was established, including Professor Arthur Kinoy, Pauline Murray and Eleanor Holmes Norton. We managed to meet the Dean's conditions, and the Reporter was permitted to publish at Rutgers Law School. But, even after fulfilling all of these conditions, the administration directed there was to be no mention of Rutgers Law School on the publication.

Thankfully, that has changed. We assembled a staff of student volunteers. There were nineteen of us, and we made collective policy decisions. It was our consensus that the reporter would not be a traditional law review but would remain a law reporter: a clearinghouse, featuring shorter articles and continuing case summaries exclusively on women's issues. We also decided that the reporter would incorporate graphics, rejecting the look of a typical law journal. Our first issues were collective efforts born of 1960s activism with agreement to avoid the traditional law review hierarchy. We sat around a large table and worked out the organization and content of our

journal. Our first issue at Rutgers was published in the spring of 1972-bright yellow and lots of graphics.

We were fortunate to have Professor Ginsburg as our faculty advisor. Though her expertise at the time was largely in the area of conflict of laws, comparative law, and Civil Procedure, she had a deep interest in women's issues. She had developed a women's rights seminar at the law school and had authored the ACLU's brief before the Supreme Court in Reed v. Reed.[7] As faculty advisor to the reporter, Professor Ginsburg devoted countless hours and writing, editing, counseling the staff, attending meetings and inevitably mediating problems that arose with the administration. Her comment on Reed v. Reed appeared as the lead article in the first issue published at Rutgers. By the spring of 1973, we had published three issues. There were ten student editors and 35 students on the editorial staff.

The process of bringing the Reporter to Rutgers, working with Professor Ginsburg, organizing a cadre of students and faculty to support the publication, raising the necessary funds and publishing the journal, had a deep impact on all of us.

We're living in an imperiled world. The elephant in this room; our democracy and access to reproductive freedom is on the line. There are many pressing issues facing us ... We have made progress in women's rights. Fifty-four years ago, I could not have imagined a woman running for President on a major party ticket, a Supreme Court with four women justices, a powerful and smart woman as the last speaker of the House, and another as the previous Secretary of State. Fifty-four years ago, there were eleven women members of Congress, 2%. Today there are 150, or 28%. One of these women, Senator Elizabeth Warren, entered Rutgers Law School in 1973 ....

The lessons we learned, creating and nurturing the Women's Rights Law Reporter over the years have served us well. Women's legal issues have come to the forefront of political life during these years. In Congress, the courts, and the executive branch, the Reporter has been there, raising pertinent issues, analyzing gender related cases, and providing creative strategies for moving forward, like today. We are no longer required to follow male models in order to succeed. Creating and cultivating institutions for women to reach their full potential, our full potential, is what we as women did here at Rutgers in 1970, and what we must continue to do until gender equity is a baseline in our world. We are not going back. Thank you.

Marissa Carvelli: Thank you so much, Elizabeth.