

PROFILE

The law latest focus for Potter

And the long-time London resident is certain who she wants to help — women in need.

By Jenn Goddu
Free Press Reporter

Judith Potter has always been a busy woman, whether working on behalf of single mothers or trying to improve the community.

She has been a singer, a student, a businessperson and a candidate for municipal office. And now, at 56, she's a family lawyer in her own practice.

Sitting in a bright, neat office decked with framed posters proclaiming women's empowerment, Potter is relaxed and casual.

"I've had a really interesting life and a rather privileged life," she says.

She describes her pursuit of so many varied interests as a "growth process," which in the last six years has brought her to family law.

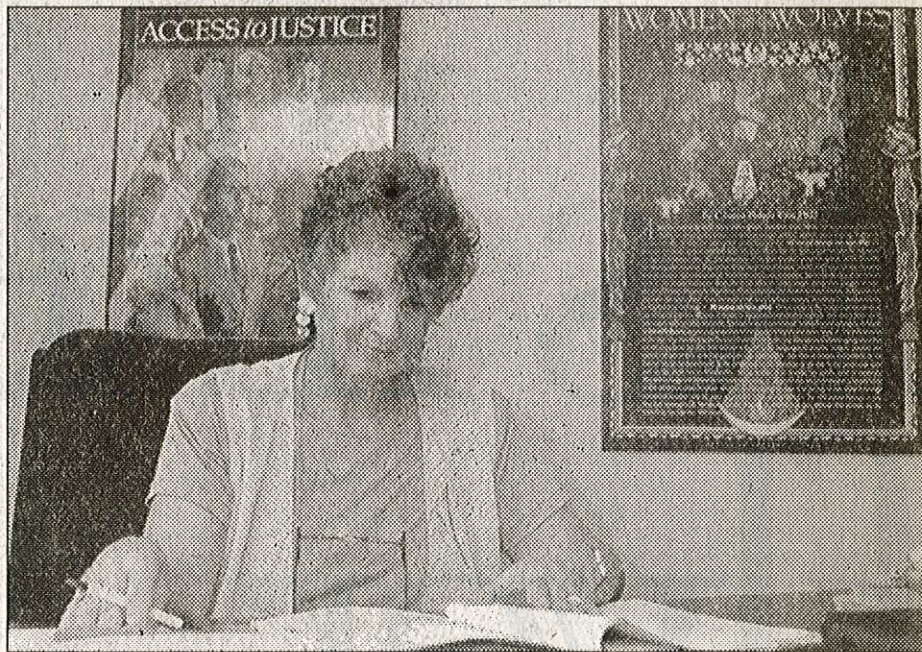
"I felt that I had something to offer," she says, describing her decision to attend the University of Windsor's law school in her mid-40s.

PART-TIME: Having completed her BA in social science at the University of Western Ontario, taking part-time courses for 10 years, and having volunteered in women's shelters, Potter knew exactly who she wanted to work with.

"My mandate is to work as much as possible with women for women," she says.

Potter is one of a shrinking number of lawyers who continue to take on legal Aid clients — clients who, in family law, are most often women.

"I'm very concerned about these women," says Potter. "The whole system right now is working against them,



SUSAN BRADNAM / The London Free Press

London lawyer Judith Potter looks over files in her Fullarton Street office.

or is about to."

Dani Berry, Potter's assistant, says her boss has "never turned anyone away. . . . She is not in this just for the money, but because she has a strong conviction toward what she does."

Potter applies that same conviction to whatever activity she puts her mind to.

During her 30 years as a London resident, she has volunteered with a number of organizations, including Women's Community House, the Battered Women's Advocacy Centre and the London Advisory Committee on the Arts.

She is now "limiting" herself by focusing her volunteer energy on the University of Western Ontario's board of governors.

And what does this woman, described by Berry as a "very com-

manding, self-assured person" who "knows how to reach out and be very soft, gentle and caring," do in her spare time?

FOUR GENERATIONS: Along with inline skating, reading and writing poetry, Potter spends as much time as she can with her family. For Potter, that's four generations of family.

Married to her husband Ron for 37 years, Potter has three grown children, three grandchildren. Her parents live in Kitchener where Potter was born.

"My family has always been there for me," she says. "They are very proud of my accomplishments."

But Potter isn't dwelling on future accomplishments.

"Things have always just come together," she says. "You kind of catch the brass ring when you're ready."