ANN E. STEVNING-ROE, BA, JD
As told to Jane Kennedy

Ann E. Stevning-Roe graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree, summa cum laude, from UW Platteville in 1980 and with a Juris Doctor, cum laude, from UW-Madison Law School in 1984.

She has retired from a successful and fulfilling career as an attorney. She most recently had a solo private practice and previously was a partner/ attorney with Minder, Gross & Stevning-Roe. She has practiced at the same location, 214 West Fifth Street, Marshfield, since June 1984.

Ann is married to Bart Stevning-Roe who has retired from teaching and coaching swimming. They raised two sons, Andrew Stevning-Roe and Thomas Stevning-Roe, who voted in every election, sending selfies with their "I voted" stickers to Mom, and who both became feminists. Overall, Ann regards this as her proudest accomplishment.

Ann grew up in a family with six children. Her mother sent "mixed messages" about women, as she herself was a stay-at-home mom, but she pushed her children to excel academically. Her mother, a staunch Democrat, was proud and supportive of Ann's political activities, even when she was a child, and later, of her career. Her father, a conservative, worked as a company manager. The family lived in various cities in Ohio, then Poughkeepsie, NY, and later Freeport, IL.

Ann became involved in politics as a teenager demonstrating against the war in Vietnam. She stated, "I was a half year too young to vote in 1972, but, as a volunteer poll watcher, I was able to object to the counting of a vote for Richard Nixon, so felt enfranchised."

Ann witnessed problems with voter suppression during the 1972 election, when lists of registered voters for the neighborhoods of color in Freeport, IL, were "lost" until near the close of elections, thereby disenfranchising minorities. As a teen, she participated in a civil rights demonstration. After college, Ann was hired as a county worker for a Community Action Program (CAP) in southwest Wisconsin. There, she saw firsthand the effects of discrimination against women. In order to be more effective in helping in this area and other areas involving fairness, she decided to go to law school. After graduation in 1984, she started her practice in Marshfield and has remained here ever since. In her practice, she primarily focused on women and families.

She did a lot of legal work with clients of Personal Development Center, a local organization that helps victims of domestic abuse.

Ann was initially one of only two female lawyers in Marshfield. She was the first woman to be Court Commissioner in Wood County.


Ann Stevning-Roe

Stevning-Roe's contribution to the community was not limited to her law practice. Ann has been an election integrity official for the Democratic Party in 2004, 2008, and 2012, as well as for school referenda elections, and a canvasser and call volunteer for the Democratic Party.

Ann noted, "I became concerned about gerrymandering in 2011, attending a presentation by former Congressman Obey and writing letters. When the Whitford case was remanded by the U.S. Supreme Court, I contacted the attorneys and joined as a plaintiff. After the case was dismissed, I started working with grassroots efforts for the movement for a nonpartisan legislative and congressional redistricting commission." Ann is an active member of the 7th Congressional District Fair Maps team and was a leader in the successful referendum on the April 2020, ballot in Wood County.

Stevning-Roe has been a strong advocate for reproductive rights for over forty years. When asked, she cannot recall a turning point in her life when she became a feminist. She says, "It was always there." She has a strong sense of fairness. She has advocated for funding for various forms of contraception, knowing that this is directly related to economic concerns for women. Currently, she is working on educating community members regarding the SAVE Act and its underlying objective to disenfranchise women at the polls.

When asked if she has any advice to give, Ann says, "You need to have outside activities." Ann's hobbies include singing with Central Chamber Chorale and participating in various musicals at the UW-Marshfield/Wood County. She also enjoys walking in the woods.

Ann Stevning-Roe is known throughout the community for her sharp mind, her advocacy for women, her advocacy for fairness, her humor, and her bright, positive personality.