

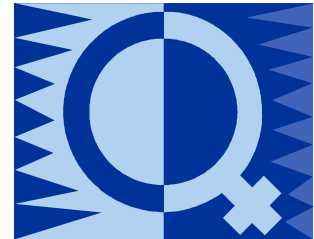
**WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH
A WOMAN WHO INFLUENCED HISTORY**

**SARAH WEDDINGTON, GROUNDBREAKING ATTORNEY,
SPEAKS AT HOFSTRA LAW SCHOOL SYMPOSIUM**

By Mindy Ferrentino Wolfle

On January 16, 2003, I had the privilege of attending a program jointly hosted by the Hofstra University Center for Children, Families and the Law, Planned Parenthood of Nassau County and Planned Parenthood Hudson Peconic.

The featured speaker at the symposium was Sarah Weddington, the attorney who successfully argued the landmark *Roe v. Wade* reproductive-rights case before the U.S. Supreme Court in 1973. At the time, Ms. Weddington was only 26 years old and thought to be the youngest woman ever to win a case before the Supreme Court. Her other outstanding accomplishments include becoming the first woman from Austin to be elected to the Texas House of Representatives, where she served three terms before becoming the U.S. Department of Agriculture's General Counsel, the first woman ever to hold that position. Ms. Weddington also served as Assistant to the President of the United States, where she was designated by President Jimmy Carter to direct his administration's work on women's issues and leadership outreach.



Ms. Weddington is an engaging, astute and entirely entertaining speaker, whose current focus is on the development of leadership in a younger generation of women as well as promoting self-renewal skills. When speaking or writing about her career's focus on reproductive rights, Ms. Weddington avoids the rhetoric of morality. Thirty years after *Roe v. Wade*, her pivotal conviction remains that reproductive decisions should be those of the individual, not of the government. *Roe v. Wade* established every woman's right to bodily autonomy. On a legal level, it was not what the choice would be, but who would make that choice. In Weddington's rousing presentation, she made one point clear: from the beginning, *Roe v. Wade* was about the rights of all women, not just one woman in particular. Weddington is visiting college campuses across the country to inspire vigilance among

young women and to heighten awareness concerning the appointment of Supreme Court justices who might have a say in the future of *Roe v. Wade*.

Sarah Weddington, the best-selling author of *A Question of Choice*, shared with the audience the personal battle she now fights with breast cancer. This dynamic woman, a trailblazer — whether the issue is leadership, gender equity or reproductive rights — epitomizes the theme of Women's History Month: a leader who has made great contributions to the rights of women and whose efforts expand the possibilities for generations to come.