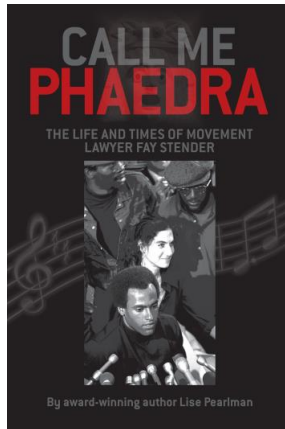


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Ellen Whitfield, Publicist
JKS Communications
ellen@jkscommunications.com
615-258-5537

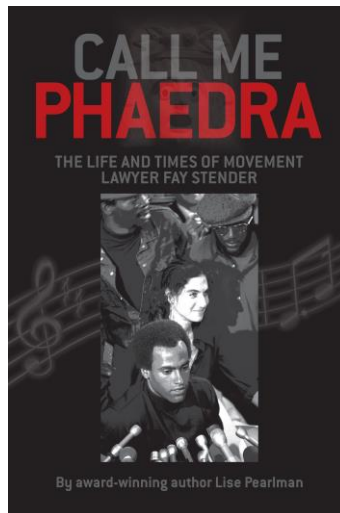
Critically-acclaimed author creates searing portrait of pioneering activist Fay Stender and her Progressive circle in the Cold War Era



SAN FRANCISCO – Fay Stender was an extraordinary personality and giant in her field who has never -- until now -- been the subject of a full biography. A middle class child prodigy, she abandoned the concert piano to become a zealous advocate for society’s most scorned and vilified defendants, from the Rosenberg espionage case in the early ’50s to Black Panther leader Huey Newton and revolutionary prisoner George Jackson, in the late ‘60s and early ’70s. Lise Pearlman’s comprehensive new book, *Call Me Phaedra: The Life and Times of Movement Lawyer Fay Stender* (Regent Press, June 5, 2018) examines Stender’s life, from her childhood to her amazing legal successes in a hostile environment, her pioneering work for prison reform, and her bitter falling out with the infamous radicals whom she helped mold into Movement icons. It also chronicles the experiences of her circle of committed activists who were deeply dissatisfied by the reality masked by the white-washed image of America shown on TV in those years and who committed themselves – like Fay Stender – to push society to live up to its stated goals of liberty and justice for all.

Lise Pearlman is a retired judge and prize-winning author of The Sky’s the Limit: People v. Newton, The Real Trial of the 20th Century? and American Justice on Trial: People v. Newton as well as a critically-acclaimed third history book released in November 2017, With Justice for Some: Politically Charged Criminal Trials of the Early 20th Century That Helped Shape Today’s America. Living her whole adult life in the Bay Area where Stender spent her legal career, Pearlman is uniquely qualified to write this definitive biography of Stender. Like Stender, Pearlman clerked on the California Supreme Court, served on the Board of California Women Lawyers and herself has been recognized as a pioneer. She graduated in the first class of women at Yale University, won publicity as the first woman managing partner of a California law firm and was appointed the first Presiding Judge of the state’s lawyer disciplinary court.

About the Book



Call Me Phaedra: The Life and Times of Movement Lawyer Fay Stender provides an inside view of activism during the McCarthy Era, the Civil Rights Movement, Free Speech Era, the rise of black power, and the Women’s Rights Movement. It chronicles the extraordinary life and career of Fay Stender, focused particularly on her work as a rare female criminal defense lawyer and ground-breaking prisoners’ rights advocate. The book focuses on Stender’s achievements and challenges representing two black revolutionary clients. Her work both won her international acclaim as a top Movement lawyer and propelled her to a tragic end. The saga of this feminine icon will fascinate those who lived through these eras as well as young adults today interested in the history of American activism and, particularly, women who challenged white-male monopoly power. Those who are working to change American society for the better today can draw valuable lessons from this important new biography and history book which reflects years of research, including access to several unpublished private collections and scores of exclusive interviews.

Call Me Phaedra: The Life and Times of Movement Lawyer Fay Stender

Lise Pearlman | June 5, 2018 | Regent Press

Paperback | 978-1-58790-435-6 | \$29.95

E-book | 978-1-58790-436-3 | \$12.95

www.JKSCommunications.com | 237 Old Hickory Blvd., Suite 201, Nashville, TN 37221

Ellen Whitfield | 615-258-5537 | ellen@jkscommunications.com



Advance praise:

Diligently researched and carefully written . . . Pearlman’s biography accords Fay Stender the recognition she deserves as a seminal criminal defense lawyer at a pivotal moment in the history of the California prison system.

—Jonah Raskin, “Warriors Not Victims: George Jackson and Fay Stender,”
Counterpunch, May 16, 2018 www.counterpunch.org

A compelling read — the extraordinary life story of Fay Stender, whom I vividly recall as a brilliant, charismatic woman lawyer at the forefront of radical politics in the Seventies. Once again, Lise Pearlman has done a masterful job capturing this tumultuous and instructive time.

—Barry Scheck, co-Director of The Innocence Project

Moving, well written, at times almost poetic, Lise Pearlman’s new often thrilling book tells the story of Fay Stender, a revolutionary pioneering woman lawyer dedicated to fighting to achieve justice for some of America’s most notorious prisoners. Fay was my friend from the time of our college days, through the years she rose to international acclaim and notoriety, until her untimely death stemming from the gun of a man who tried to murder her. Lise’s book grippingly sheds light on this remarkable woman’s courageous life and the turbulent time in which she made a significant impact on the arc of justice.

— Robert Richter, Award-winning Documentary Filmmaker

Lise Pearlman’s book generates great emotional traction . . . recounting the heroic, tragic life . . . and death . . . of one of America’s most zealous, brilliant lawyers. It is written with clarity and precision ... and is a necessary remembrance of an amazing woman.”

—Penny Cooper, Member of the California State Bar Trial Lawyer Hall of Fame

Call Me Phaedra makes two major contributions to American studies. It documents the life and times of a remarkable activist woman lawyer in the men’s world of mid-20th century law; Stender was a committed lawyer, exhausting and inspiring to work with. It also chronicles the experience of a strong circle of Progressives emerging from the ‘Red Scare’ in that Cold War era who struggled to make society more just at a time when bucking conformity was not

—Peter Franck, Former partner of Stender and 2017 San Francisco Lawyers Guild “Champion of Justice”

www.JKSCommunications.com | 237 Old Hickory Blvd., Suite 201, Nashville, TN 37221
Ellen Whitfield | 615-258-5537 | ellen@jkscommunications.com

An Interview with LISE PEARLMAN

1. How long have you been interested in Fay Stender?

Decades. Our lives overlapped in the East Bay though we never met. I recall hearing on the radio Memorial Day weekend 1979 the shocking news that she had just been shot in her home in Berkeley. I understood she had earlier specialized in prisoners' rights. I first realized I wanted to know more of her life story after I joined the Board of California Women Lawyers in the 1990s, which gives out an annual award in her name to a lawyer selected for her courage and commitment to representing "women, disadvantaged groups and unpopular causes." My interest was piqued when I attended a program on great trial lawyers at a judicial conference around the turn of the century where Chief Judge Marilyn Patel singled out Fay Stender as someone who should have been listed.

2. What was the most interesting thing you found out when you were researching Stender for the book?

How many contradictions she embodied. She alternated bold, impetuous actions, with fearful paralysis. She rejected as bourgeois the values of her parents and her sister, but, despite embracing radicals, time and again found herself leaning on the traditions she was raised with. By the time of her death, she had come full circle. She rejected a career as a concert pianist but always found solace playing the piano. She turned some friends into enemies or "frenemies" and sometimes back again. She kept returning to her husband for security in a rocky, on again, off again marriage. It was surprising to find out how much she valued her Jewish heritage throughout her life though she seldom attended services, how much she depended on her mother's moral support despite their often-strained relationship, and how close she became to her sister.

3. What long term impact did Stender make on the legal system?

She was a pioneer among women lawyers seeking careers in criminal defense. She played a key role in revolutionizing the American "jury of one's peers" so that nowadays that constitutional guarantee is drawn from a diverse cross-section of citizens instead of the traditional 12 white men. Her brilliant work with her co-counsel Charles Garry for Huey Newton in his 1968 death penalty trial had instant results -- seating mostly women and minorities, who then selected the first black foreman in any major murder case in the United States. Their jury selection techniques were memorialized in a 1969 handbook that became a "Bible" for criminal defense lawyers across the country. Fay Stender then was lead counsel on the Newton appeal and, remarkably, got Newton's conviction reversed. She won the first change of venue in the history of Monterey County which saved three inmates at Soledad Prison ("the Soledad Brothers") from near certain execution for the death of a guard if tried in conservative Salinas. With those two amazing achievements, she gained international fame as a Movement lawyer and inspired

many young activists to go to law school. She arranged for her inmate client George Jackson's edited letters to be published in a book, *Soledad Brother: The Prison Letters of George Jackson*, that became an international best seller. She launched the Prisoners'

Rights Movement, filing numerous actions on behalf of inmates through staff lawyers, law students and mainstream lawyers she convinced to volunteer their time. Law schools began clinics for prisoner representation they never had before. She helped establish the rights of unmarried life partners and pave the way for lesbian adoptions.

4. Did the work on your previous books help when you were writing this biography? Yes and no. I started this project first and put it aside to write the others. I talk about that in the author's note in my book. The filmed interviews for the documentary project "American Justice on Trial" added some key insights I lacked before – particularly from former Deputy Public Defender Penny Cooper, who observed part of the 1968 Newton trial, and from pioneering African-American journalist Belva Davis, who covered the trial as a cub reporter. I also found extremely valuable the perspectives of Huey Newton's older brother Melvin, a great admirer of Fay's skills and dedication, and those of prosecutor Lowell Jensen, who had great respect for her, both as an adversary in an era when women lawyers rarely represented defendants in criminal cases, and later as a star witness for the prosecution of her assailant.

5. What can people be able to learn from Stender?

Both how a passion for a cause and persistence can pay off and a cautionary tale of the perils of unbridled zeal and reckless entanglements. She accomplished amazing results for Huey Newton and for George Jackson and in expanding legal services for prisoners. Personally, she took great risks and did not observe boundaries in her relationships with her black militant clients. Her presumptuousness in acting on behalf of George Jackson proved fatal.

6. What is the relevance of this book in the "Me Too" era?

It is highly relevant. Fay Stender went to law school and practiced in a white-male world where women were often taken advantage of and demeaned. If Charles Garry had his way, she would have spent her whole career as his sidekick, never making partner. She is also an example of a woman who suffered greatly from mistreatment by two men – emotionally from being rejected in humiliating fashion by her client Huey Newton, and physically in a near fatal attack by a follower of George Jackson.

7. Do you relate personally to Stender?

Yes and no. Both of us are of Jewish heritage from middle class intellectual families. Her dad was a devoted chess player, so were my mother and her father. Our fathers' careers were both in the sciences. My mother was an artist; her father painted as a hobby. We each had Polish grandparents who fled persecution for a new life in America. We both value our children above all and share a strong commitment to civil rights and justice. I am far more cautious by nature. I would not have taken the risks she did.

8. How do you find the time to do this kind of extensive research and write when you have so many other responsibilities?



I also share Fay Stender's compulsion to juggle many balls in the air. I think it's true that when you want to get something done you ask a busy person. If it appears worthwhile, they will make time.

9. Are there any other people you'd like to cover in future works?

I started researching and writing another history book a while back, but put it aside. I am not ready to discuss its subject. I have thought about the possibility of collaborating on a book about my class of the first women who graduated from Yale, but have not pursued that idea.

10. Is there anything else you'd like to tell your readers?

I think that we are seeing echoes of the McCarthy Era today and a need for young people to step up again in the forefront of activism. It is heartening to see so many of them eager to lead the way. I hope my books provide some useful insights from those who were inspired to become active from the '50s through the '70s.