

EMORY

A person wearing a full-body white protective suit, including a hood and gloves, stands centrally against a background with a red-to-purple gradient. The person's face is visible through the hood's opening.

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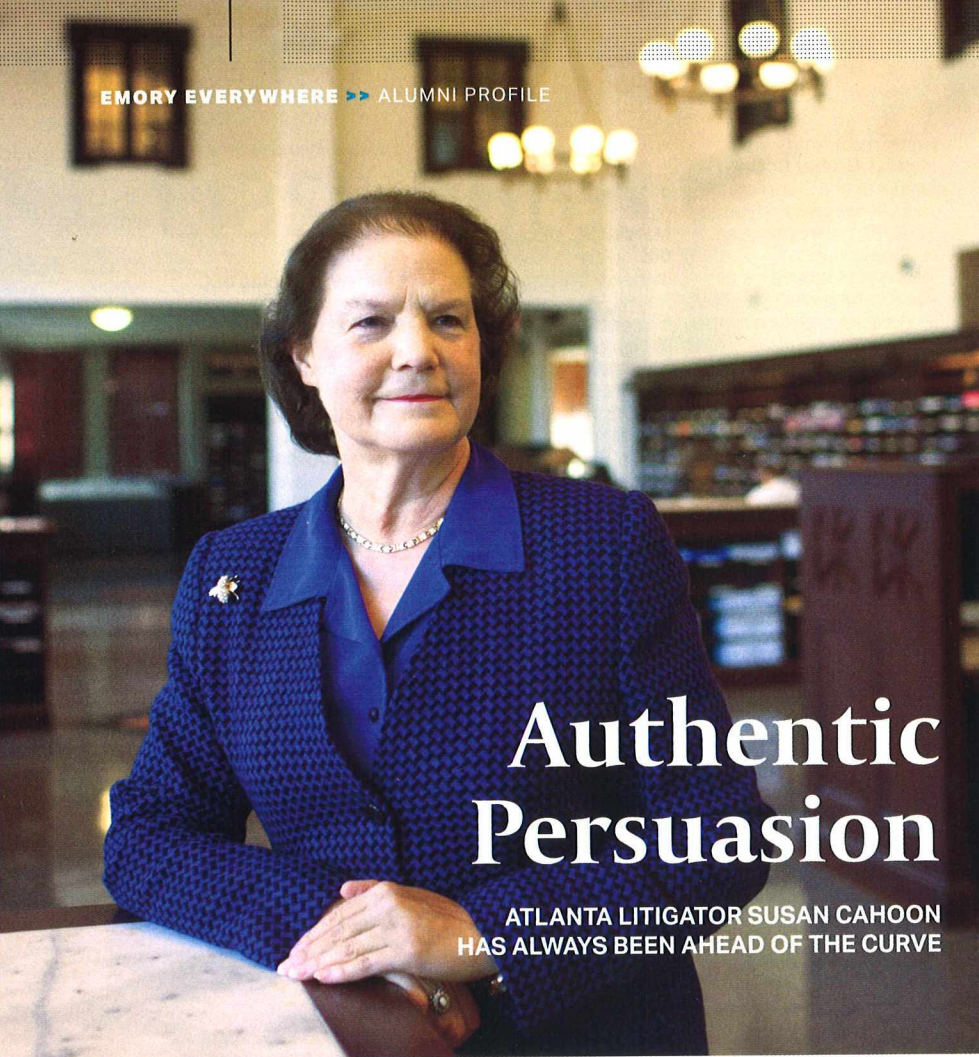
FIVE YEARS AGO,
THIS EMORY NURSE
STOOD UP TO EBOLA.

NOW SHE TEACHES
OTHERS HOW TO
GIVE INFECTIOUS
DISEASE A PROPER
DRESSING DOWN.

WHEN THE GLOVES COME OFF

The New
Student
Center

Autism
Education



Authentic Persuasion

ATLANTA LITIGATOR SUSAN CAHOON
HAS ALWAYS BEEN AHEAD OF THE CURVE

Susan Cahoon 68C was just fifteen when she entered Emory College in 1964. An only child, Cahoon grew up in Jacksonville, Florida, where she skipped a grade in elementary school and jumped ahead of her high school classmates after receiving credit for classes she took when her parents briefly lived in Washington state. She loved reading, history, politics, and watching TV courtroom lawyers on *Perry Mason* and *The Defenders*.

During high school, she served as a juror with the Jacksonville Youth Council on Civic Affairs, interviewed public officials on a weekly radio show for teens, and spoke on topics like the common market in classes with students older than she.

"I've always had an affinity for talking on my feet," says Cahoon, an Atlanta litigator for nearly fifty years.

It was her high school guidance counselor who suggested applying for early admission to Emory. Although significantly younger than her classmates, Cahoon excelled academically, majoring in economics, and helped the Barkley Forum debate team win its first national championship in 1967. A year later, she graduated with top honors and entered Harvard Law School at age nineteen.

The summer after her second year of law school, Cahoon clerked for Kilpatrick Townsend and Stockton, one of two Atlanta firms that offered her a clerkship. "I was very naive," says Cahoon. "I was oblivious to the thought there would be any discrimination against me because I was female. If you looked at my qualifications, I probably had the best of anyone at Harvard bound for Atlanta that summer."

"When I got out of law school, women made up 7 percent of my class at Harvard," she adds. "It was 25 percent by the mid- to late 1970s."

Kilpatrick Townsend bucked the trend and hired Cahoon after she graduated from Harvard in 1971. She became the first female partner in 1977 at age twenty-eight. The firm never steered her away from litigation practice, despite a bias against women that was pronounced at the time.

Today she is the firm's general counsel with diverse expertise, including patent infringement, commercial disputes, and securities litigation. She has been named one of the "Best Lawyers in America" and "Atlanta Lawyer of the Year" numerous times.

"Everyone has their own style of persuasion," she says. "Whatever their style, trial lawyers have to be authentic."

Soon after joining Kilpatrick Townsend in the early 1970s, Cahoon reconnected with Emory, helping organize class reunions, leading the Atlanta-area Emory Club as president, serving on advisory groups to the dean of Emory College, and supporting fundraising campaigns. Elected to Emory's Board of Trustees in 2009, she became an emeritus trustee late last year.

During her tenure, Kilpatrick Townsend and Stockton created the Susan A. Cahoon Scholarship endowment to support Emory College students. Cahoon herself endowed a chair held by Patrick Allitt, the first Cahoon Family Professor of American History.

"A general education provides a sense of historical context and knowledge of the world around you," she says. "It pays off down the road in having the ability to organize your thoughts and communicate effectively."

—Pam Auchmurey