erin brockovich is back, with tales of warrior women

Move over, Julia Roberts. The real Erin Brockovich, 42, is back as the host of Final Justice, a new Lifetime Television series about women who've fought the legal system, just as she did.

In 1996, she won \$333 million for the residents of Hinkley, California, in a class-action suit against utility company PG&E; the ensuing movie made Brockovich a household name. "My whole life has been different since it came out," she says.

But she's still working at the same firm. And Ed Masry (played by Albert Finney in the film) is still her boss, "although he keeps trying to fire me," she laughs.

When she's not at work or lecturing around the country, she relaxes with her husband, actor Eric Ellis, 37; kids Matthew, 19, Katie, 18, and Beth, 11; and their cat, Jade. "I'm very nesty," Brockovich says. "I'd rather be home."

—Cheryl Alkon

Ove Letters Three povelists on how they met their other half

Susan Isaacs on meeting ELKAN ABRAMOWITZ

mother knows best I was at my grandmother's eighty-fifth birthday when an obscure second cousin onceremoved came over and

demanded: "You seeing anyone?"

"Yes," I declared, as my mother said, "No."
"My husband has a very lovely nephew,"
cousin Helen proclaimed.

"I really appreciate it, but no thanks," I responded.

"What's his name?" my mother inquired.

"Elkan Abramowitz."

"No thanks," I said again.

"He's a lawyer," cousin Helen went on, undeterred. "A federal prosecutor."

This was 1967, and she appeared to be suggesting the archetypal establishment pig. "No, thanks," I said once more.

An elbow that belonged to my mother nudged my rib cage.

"Give Helen your number."

"You'll love him," cousin Helen assured me. And, as it turned out, I did.

ISAACS LAST WROTE LONG TIME NO SEE (HARPERCOLLINS)

Benjamin Cheever on meeting



Immediate and mutual dislike. That's what we felt for each other. She was my sister's friend and probably a snob. She'd come to my parents' house

for Christmas dinner.

Once in a great while, when my father said something witty or literary, she'd let out a little laugh. Not a big laugh, mind you, but a little laugh. Clearly audible, I mean, if you were sitting right beside her. Which I happened to be.

Pretty soon I was telling everybody about my brand-new Smith Corona typewriter. The ribbon came in a cartridge. If you wanted to write in blue, you used the blue cartridge. If you wanted to write in red, you used the red cartridge.

Janet nodded. "I have one of those," she said.

"How is it?"

"Well," she said, "you have to change the ribbon a lot." Feminine wiles. That's what got me. But then it's been a splendid marriage. Go figure.

CHEEVER IS AUTHOR OF FAMOUS AFTER DEATH (BLOOMSBURY PUBLISHING)

David Baldacci on meeting

trial by fire My wife and I met at a barbeque. I had just begun

my career as a trial lawyer and was in full heat to announce this to every guest unfortunate enough to enter my crosshairs.

As I was expounding to a guest that things looked good for me to soon appear before the Supreme Court, I felt a tap on my shoulder. I turned to find this splendid Michelle staring at me. She graced me with a truly devastating smile and said, "I understand you're a lawyer."

"Yes," the great man replied modestly, "I am."

She leaned closer, as did I, certain the next word would be a request for a date or perhaps a quick-strike proposal of marriage.

"I wouldn't go around telling everybody that if

I were you."

With that insult absorbed I thought of nothing else except my pursuit of this woman up and to the point we were married, which goes to show that even fools can strike gold.

BALDACCI LAST WROTE THE CHRISTMAS TRAIN (WARNER BOOKS)

-COMPILED BY LEWIS BURKE FRUMKES



KATEY SAGAL my life in BRAS Sagal, 49 stars in ABC's 8 Simple Rules . . .

Sixties

"I had one of those weird, stretchy training bras. And I had it about a year after I needed it, because I blossomed young. But everyone was in denial, acting like I hadn't."

Seventies

"As a Harlette [backup singer to Bette Midler], I wore a mermaid costume—a green bra and a long, tight fin, That was fun. Bette ran around in her bra all the time."



Eighties

"Peg [from Married... with Children] wore a black Frederick's of Hollywood push-up bra, It's in their Lingerie Museum. She thought she was really something else."

Nineties "I wore maternity bras

for five years! That's a funny little bra. It's really wild, what happens to your body. At that point, you don't care, you just want to be covered."





PHOTOS, THIS PAGE: CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LETT.

LAWRENCE (2), I