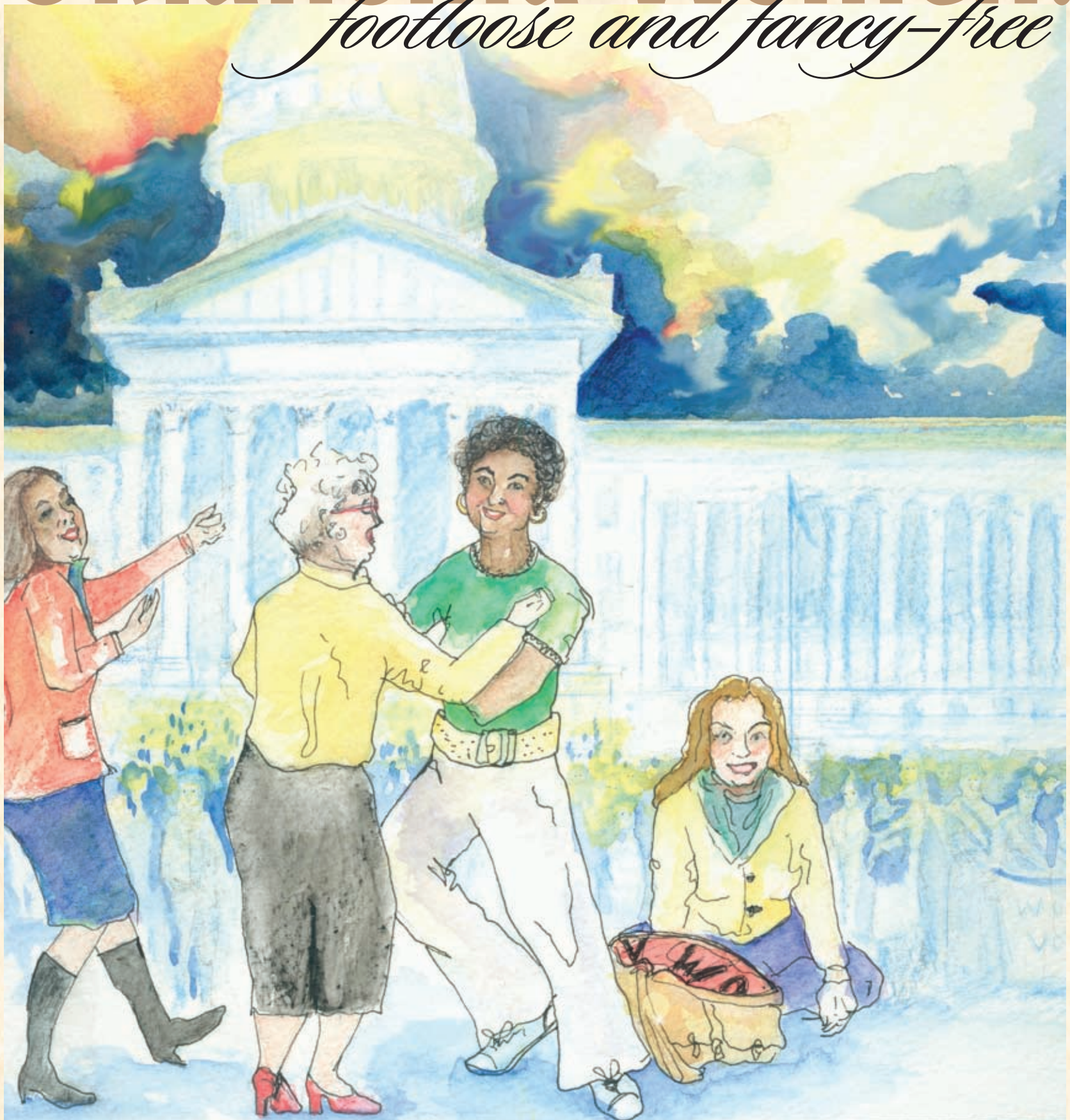


Oklahoma Women:

footloose and fancy-free



Oklahoma Women: Footloose and Fancy-Free

is an educational supplement produced by the Women's Archives at Oklahoma State University, the Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women and *The Oklahoman*.

R. Darcy
Jennifer Paustenbaugh
Kate Blalack

With assistance from:

Regina Goodwin
Kelly Morris
Jordan Ross
T. J. Smith

And special thanks to:

Trixy Barnes
Jamie Fullerton
Amy Mitchell
John Gullo
Jean Warner
National Women's History Project
Oklahoma Heritage Association
Oklahoma Historical Society

Artist Kate Blalack created the original watercolor used for the cover. Oklahoma, Foot-Loose and Fancy Free is the title of Oklahoma historian Angie Debo's 1949 book about the Sooner State. It was one of the inspirations for this 2008 Women's History Month supplement. For more on Angie Debo, see page 8.

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The Oklahoma Women's Network "Notable Oklahoma Women" available at: http://www.ok.gov/opm/Status_of_Women/Local%20Publish/ AND

The Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women available at: <http://www.opm.ok.gov>

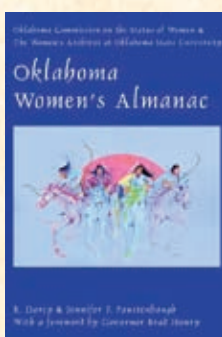


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Oklahoma Women: Footloose and Fancy-Free

Oklahoma women are exciting, their accomplishments fascinating. They do not easily fit into molds crafted by others, elsewhere. Oklahoma women make their own way. Some stay at home quietly contributing to their families and communities. Some exceed every expectation and become firsts in politics and government, excel as athletes, entertainers and artists. Others go on to flourish in New York, California, Japan, Europe, wherever their fancy takes them. One Oklahoma woman, Shannon Lucid, flew 75.2 million miles through space.

Women have made, and continue to make, their wonderful contributions to Oklahoma. But what they have achieved goes far beyond our borders and even America's borders. Oklahoma women artists and entertainers, political leaders and writers, scientists and athletes are nationally and internationally respected, listened to and admired.

Read their stories.

R. Darcy and Jennifer Paustenbaugh
Editors



Governor Brad Henry and Lieutenant Governor Jari Askins, both Democrats, serve as the state's top executives. Askins is Oklahoma's second female Lieutenant Governor. Who was the first?

Answer: Mary Fallin, who served three terms as Lieutenant Governor from 1991–2007.

Photo courtesy Office of Governor Brad Henry

Women in Politics

Look through today's newspaper. Congress, the Oklahoma Legislature and political candidates are all discussing issues. Do female candidates have different issues or positions than male candidates? What are the differences? Why do you think this is?

Hannah Diggs Atkins was the first African American woman elected to the Oklahoma Legislature when she won a seat in the Oklahoma House in 1968. She went on to serve 6 terms (12 years) and was later appointed Oklahoma Secretary of State and Cabinet Secretary for Social Services by Governor Henry Bellmon. (Photo courtesy of the Women's Archive at Oklahoma State University.)



In 1920 Oklahomans elected two women to the Oklahoma Legislature. **Lamar Looney** (above left) of Hollis, Oklahoma, was elected to the Senate and **Bessie McColgin** (above right), a mother of ten children from Reydon, was elected to the House. Since 2005, portraits of these pioneering women have hung in the rotunda of the State Capitol.

Kate Barnard was the first woman to be elected as a state official in Oklahoma when she was elected Commissioner of Charities and Corrections in 1907. She held this office for 2 terms. She helped make compulsory education the law, worked to make child labor illegal and helped create laws that would make working conditions safer. (Photo courtesy of the Research Division, Oklahoma Historical Society.)

In 1922, **Alice Brown Davis** (right) was appointed Chief of the Seminole tribe by President Warren Harding, a position she held until her death in 1935. (Photo courtesy of Research Division, Oklahoma Historical Society.)



In 1985, **Wilma Mankiller** (above) was elected Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation. Of the 38 Native American tribes and nations with headquarters in Oklahoma, twenty have elected women to positions of top leadership! (Photo courtesy of the Women's Archive at Oklahoma State University.)

Women's Suffrage in Oklahoma

Oklahoma's women's suffrage story extended with twists and turns from 1890 to 1940. The First Territorial Legislature granted women the right to vote in all school elections and to run, but not vote for, any county office and offices in many cities. Many women were elected to local offices they could not vote for. Oklahoma's 1906 Constitution largely kept this system but added that eight offices, including Governor, must be held by a male. A corporation commissioner must be a voter, which then excluded women, and Chief Mine Inspector and Commissioner of Charities and Corrections had no requirements that would exclude a woman. In 1918, Oklahoma became the thirteenth state to grant women suffrage. Because of the "male" requirement, however, women were still prevented from running for the top eight executive offices. It was not until 1942 that voters took that provision out and full suffrage for Oklahoma women became the law.

Fast Facts

- In recent history, nearly all of the elected County Court Clerks are women, and women make up almost half of all elected county officials.
- Cora Diehl, a member of the Populist Party, was elected Logan County Register of Deeds in 1891.
- Oklahoma's first woman sheriff was Mrs. Emma M. Bond, a Democrat from Grady County, 1939.
- Patience Latting, a Democrat from Oklahoma City, became the first woman mayor of a city 350,000 or more in the United States, 1971.
- Republican Claudette Henry, State Treasurer, 1990, was the first woman elected to a statewide office that had been restricted to males until 1942.
- Alma Wilson was appointed by Governor George Nigh in 1982 as Oklahoma's first woman Supreme Court justice. She became Chief Justice in 1995.
- Robin Cauthron, appointed by President George Bush in 1991, became Oklahoma's first female U.S. Federal District Judge.
- Stephanie Seymour, appointed by President Jimmy Carter in 1979, became Oklahoma's first U.S. Federal Appellate Judge, serving as Chief Judge of the Tenth Circuit 1994-2000.

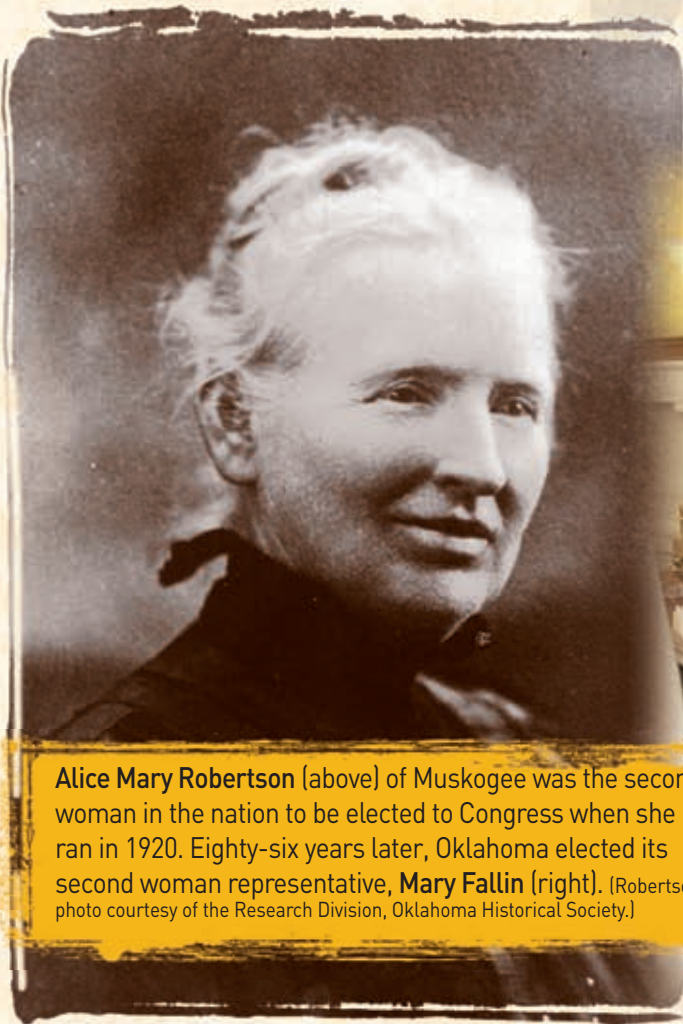
Test Your Knowledge!

What are the only two statewide elective offices that have not yet been held by women in Oklahoma?

Answer: Governor and U.S. Senator



Miss Aloysius Larch-Miller of Shawnee (above) was one of many Oklahoma women who worked for women's suffrage or the right for women to vote and to run for office. A member of the Oklahoma State Women's Suffrage Campaign, Miss Larch-Miller worked tirelessly for this cause. In January 1920, after giving a speech for suffrage in the rain, she developed pneumonia and died shortly afterwards, making her a martyr for the cause of women's suffrage.



Alice Mary Robertson (above) of Muskogee was the second woman in the nation to be elected to Congress when she ran in 1920. Eighty-six years later, Oklahoma elected its second woman representative, **Mary Fallin** (right). (Robertson photo courtesy of the Research Division, Oklahoma Historical Society.)




Women in Sports

To basketball fans across America, the month of March is known as "March Madness." During March there is lots of coverage in the news of college men's and women's basketball teams that play in the NCAA, NAIA and NIT tournaments. Look at the Sport Section in today's edition of *The Oklahoman*. Does the amount of coverage that men's and women's teams get differ? Why?

Fast Facts

Girls are an integral part of Oklahoma high school athletic competition. The nearly 500 member schools of the Oklahoma Secondary School Activities Association support fourteen sports. Two are for girls; slow and fast pitch softball. One, baseball, is for boys. Seven sports have separate competition for boys and girls; cross country, basketball, golf, soccer, swimming and diving, tennis and track. Cheerleading, football, wrestling and volleyball permit boys and girls to compete together, although cheerleading and volleyball largely involve girls while football and wrestling are dominated by boys.

The four NCAA Division I schools in Oklahoma (2005–2006) had a total of 865 women varsity athletes. There were 270 at Oklahoma State University, 281 at University of Oklahoma, 196 at Tulsa and 116 at Oral Roberts. The same schools had 949 varsity male athletes. Operating budgets for the women's sports averaged \$6,015,460 — approximately 37 percent of the budget for men at the same schools.



Dale McNamara (above) founded the Women's Golf Program at the University of Tulsa in 1974 and over the next 26 years built a program that won four national team championships and five national runner-up titles. Several times McNamara was recognized as the National Coach of the Year and she helped produce several outstanding players who have had successful LPGA careers including golf legend Nancy Lopez and her own daughter Melissa.

An Oklahoma State University golfer, **Val Skinner**, (above) was the 1980 and 1982 Big Eight Conference Women's Golf Champion, 1982 Big Eight Conference Outstanding Female Athlete, and 1982 NCAA All-American. As a professional golfer she has earned \$2,463,848 and raised more than \$2,500,000 for breast cancer research. She went on to be an analyst for the Golf Channel and CBS. (Photo courtesy of the Women's Archives at Oklahoma State University.)

Olympian **Michelle Smith** pitched for the Oklahoma State University Softball Team from 1985 to 1989 where her record was 82–20 with 46 shutouts. She went on to a professional career winning national championships in 1993, 1994 and 1995. She was on the American team that won the Pan American Games Championships in 1995 and 1999 and gold medals in the 1996 and 2000 Olympic Summer Games. She has worked in Japan for the past fourteen years where she played for the Japanese Professional League and works for Toyota.

Edmond gymnast **Shannon Miller** is the most decorated American gymnast in history having won more Olympic and World

Championship medals than any other American gymnast, male or female. In the 1992 Olympic Summer Games in Barcelona, Spain, Miller won 5 medals which was

the most of any American athlete in either the summer or winter games that year. In 2006, she was inducted into the U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame.

Litsch, Miller and Teague are three of only a handful of women to have been inducted into the Oklahoma Sports Hall of Fame.

Bertha Teague (left) coached girl's basketball at Byng High School from 1927 through 1969 where she achieved a record of 1157-115 (a .909 winning percentage), including 98 consecutive wins (1936-1939). At the last game she coached in 1969 her team won its eighth Oklahoma state championship. She was among the first three women elected to the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Massachusetts. (Photo courtesy of the Basketball Hall of Fame.)

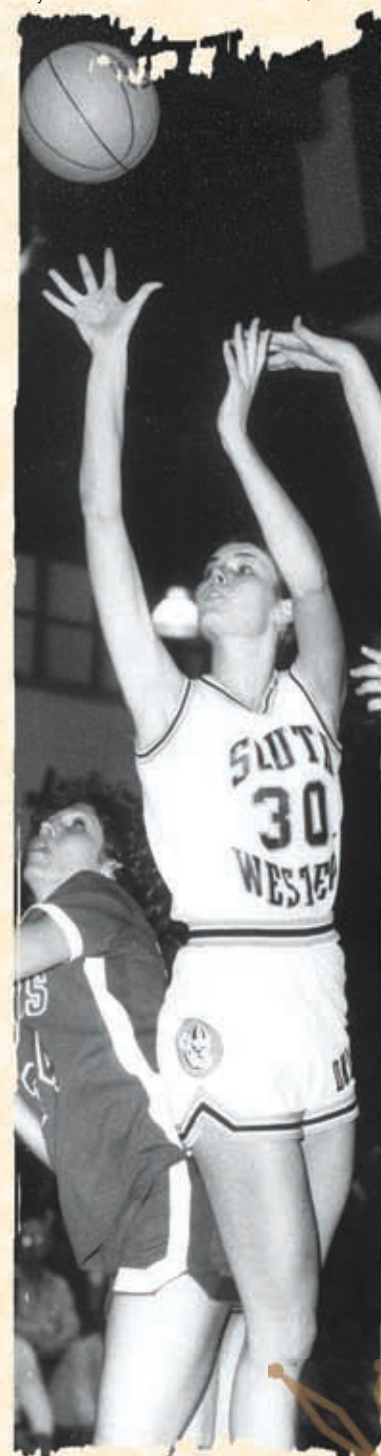
Test Your Knowledge!

Title IX is a law that among other things says opportunities for females to participate in and receive coaching in high school and college sports must be largely equivalent with those available to males. In what year did Title IX become law?

University of Oklahoma Women's Basketball Coach **Sherri Coale** was inducted in to the Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame in 2007, joining coaching legend Bertha Teague, who was inducted into the Women's Hall in 1985. Since coming to the University of Oklahoma in 1996 from Norman High School, Coale has led the Sooner women to the national championship game in 2002 and to multiple Big XII conference and regular season titles. In 2001, she was named National Coach of the Year by *ESPN The Magazine*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *Women's Basketball Journal*. (Photo courtesy of the University of Oklahoma Athletic Department.)

Kelli Litsch (right) from Fay, Oklahoma, is considered one of the best to have ever played the game of basketball. She led Thomas High School to two straight six-on-six state high school championships in 1980 and 1981.

Turning down scholarships to play at Division I schools, she went to Southwestern Oklahoma State University where she powered the Lady Bulldogs to three NAIA national championships going 129-5 and became the first female athlete to be named a first-team All-American four years in a row.



Fast Facts

The YWCA of Oklahoma City opened the first integrated cafeteria in the state. With the mission of "Eliminating Racism, Empowering Women," the YWCA of Oklahoma City has worked on behalf of women and minorities since its founding in 1907 by providing housing, employment and social services to young women. Today, the YWCA continues its century of work built on the legacy of equality and civil rights.

In 1946 Chickasha native **Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher**, (right) an African American, applied to the University of Oklahoma School of Law. She was denied admission because of race but in 1948 in a prelude to *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court ruled that she must be given an opportunity equal to that of whites. The state created the Langston University School of Law at the State Capitol in order to comply with this ruling. Sipuel had to go back to court to prove that this opportunity to study law was inferior. In 1949 she was admitted to the University of Oklahoma School of Law and became the first African American woman to attend a white law school in the South. Even then Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher, a wife and mother of three children, was not treated like the white students. After she obtained her law degree she returned to Chickasha and practiced law. In 1992, 41 years after she graduated, she was appointed to the Board of Regents at the University of Oklahoma by Governor David Walters.

(Photo courtesy of Langston University.)

Clara Luper (right) was born in C educated in the segregated scho Grayson in Okmulgee County. He include using discarded white-s missing pages, sitting at the bac allowed to try on clothing in stor restaurants, libraries, bathroom By 1958, she was a graduate of L and the University of Oklahoma Oklahoma City's segregated Dur Students, with Clara Luper as th integration of Oklahoma City eat These were the first nationally p sit-ins. On August 19, 1958, they downtown Katz Drug Store. Othe followed. The sit-ins continued u Oklahoma City passed an ordina segregation. Luper is a hero in e against blacks in public accom received over one hundred awar academic honors.

Women

Test Your Knowledge!

How many African American women currently serve in the Oklahoma Legislature? Who are they?

Historian **Angie Debo** (left) from Marshall, OK, spent most of her career researching and writing about the history of Native Americans—especially those tribes in Oklahoma. She always wanted to be completely factual and she had a very high regard for the Native tribes she studied. In her late 70s until well into her 90s she was active in fighting for the rights of Native American tribes. Her research and testimony before Congress helped Native Alaskans win lands in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and helped the Havasupai Tribe of Arizona receive important water rights. (Photo courtesy of the Women's Archives at Oklahoma State University.)

On December 20, 1976, the United States Supreme Court decided *Craig v. Boren*. The case brought in Lawton in 1954–5, and **Carolyn** student and owner, with her hus law permitted Whitener to sell 3. Whitener, with students Mark W unconstitutional sex discriminati University, joined Whitener's Tuls Court. By 1976 Whitener was the Equal Rights Amendment into th decision, became like, but not qu law. Effectively, sex discriminatio Carolyn Whitener a "heroine." (Ph

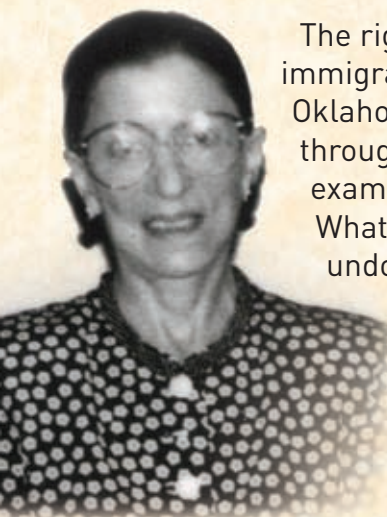
Answer: Three—Senator Judy Eason McIntyre, Senator Constance Johnson and Representative Anastasia Pittman

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Sapulpa native
**Nancy Randolph
 Davis** (left) made
 Oklahoma history
 when she became
 the first African
 American to enroll
 at Oklahoma A&M
 College (now OSU)
 in the 1949 summer
 school session.
 Davis completed her
 Master's in Home
 Economics and spent
 the next 43 years
 teaching high school
 Home Economics.
 (Photo courtesy of Pauline Kopecky.)

Leading the Fight for Civil and Women's Rights



The rights of undocumented
 immigrants is a political issue in
 Oklahoma and nationally. Look
 through today's newspaper and
 examine *The Oklahoman* online.
 What is being proposed concerning
 undocumented immigrants?
 What rights do you feel
 undocumented children have?
 Women? Men?

d States Supreme Court handed down its decision in
 together **Ruth Bader Ginsburg** (above right), who lived
 n **Whitener** (above left), an Oklahoma State University
 band, of the Honk-N-Holler convenience store. Oklahoma
 2 beer to a female at age 18 but to a male only at age 21.
 alker and Curtis Craig, filed suit in Federal court claiming
 on. Ginsburg, by then a Professor of Law at Columbia
 sa attorney Fred Gilbert in taking the case to the Supreme
 sole remaining plaintiff. Their strategy was to put the
 e Constitution by judicial interpretation. Sex, with this
 ite the same as, race as a suspect classification in the
 on in the law became unconstitutional. Ginsburg called

Photo courtesy of Carolyn Whitener.)



In 1986, **Vicki Miles-LaGrange** (above left) and Tulsa's **Maxine Horner**
 became Oklahoma's first female African American state senators.
 President Clinton appointed Miles-LaGrange a U.S. Attorney in 1993,
 making her the first African American woman to hold that position. In
 1994, she became Oklahoma's first female African American federal
 judge. Judge **Juanita Kidd Stout** (above right) was born in 1919 in
 Wewoka. In 1959, she became one of the first African American women
 to be elected to the bench when she was elected Judge of the Common
 Pleas Court in Philadelphia. In 1965, she was named "Outstanding
 Woman Lawyer of the Year" by the National Association of Women
 Lawyers.

(LaGrange photo courtesy of the Women's Archives at Oklahoma
 State University. Stout photo courtesy of Oklahoma Heritage Association.)



Rosella Hightower (left) and **Yvonne Choteau-Terekhov** (right) are two of five world famous Indian ballerinas from Oklahoma. A mural of all five including Maria Tallchief, Marjorie Tallchief and Moscelyn Larkin is featured in the rotunda of the State Capitol. After their performance careers all have been actively involved in teaching, choreography and managing ballet companies in Oklahoma, and across the United States and Europe. (Photo of Choteau-Terekhov courtesy of Oklahoma Heritage Association.)



Enid's **Leona Mitchell** is an internationally famous opera star. The soprano singer has performed all over the world including Australia, Argentina, Italy and Austria. She had her debut performance at the Metropolitan Opera in New York in the opera *Carmen* in 1975 and sang there for 18 consecutive seasons. (Photo courtesy of Leona Mitchell.)

Fast Facts

Since 1932 Oklahoma has designated a poet laureate—a poet who is recognized for their ability in this form of expression and whose job is to promote poetry around the state. Nine of Oklahoma's 15 poets laureate have been women. Oklahoma's first poet laureate was Violet McDougal in 1923.

Test Your Knowledge!

The Oklahoma State Capitol building and grounds display many outstanding works of art. One of the best known is a statue located on the plaza on the Capitol's south side. What is the statue called? What sacred symbol does she wear? Hint: <http://www.state.ok.us/~arts/capitolart/permart/sculpture/houser/waters.html>

Answer: "As Long as the Waters Flow," and an eagle feather fan



Oklahoma women have contributed to the development of the arts in many ways.

Eleanor Kirkpatrick (right) contributed her time, leadership and money to create what is now the Oklahoma City Museum of Art as well as encouraged the growth of music and theater in Oklahoma. (Photo courtesy of Oklahoma Heritage Association.)

Linda Twine (left) is a 2007 inductee of the Oklahoma Hall of Fame. She left Muscogee and Oklahoma City University for a thirty year career as a Broadway conductor, musical director and arranger, working with Lena Horne, Sammy Davis, Jr., Count Basie and in shows such as *The Wiz*, *The Color Purple* and *Ain't Misbehavin'*.



Some people know that they want to be writers from an early age. Author **S.E. Hinton** (below) of Tulsa was one of those people. Her first novel, *The Outsiders*, was published when she was only a freshman in college in 1967. *The Outsiders* as well as her books *Rumble Fish*, *Tex*, and *That was Then, This is Now* were made into movies that helped launch the careers of Matt Dillon, Tom Cruise, Emilio Estavez and Mickey Rourke. Hinton continues to be a favorite writer among young adults.

(Photo courtesy of Tulsa People Magazine.)

Fast Facts

Fifteen of the 35 writers who have been inducted in the Oklahoma Writers Hall of Fame are women:

Rilla Askew	Marilyn Harris
Deborah Camp	Carolyn G. Hart
C.J. Cherryh	Bessie Holland Heck
Deborah Chester	S. E. Hinton
Angie Debo	Billie Letts
Connie Feddersen	Dian Curtis Regan
Georgina Gentry	Judith Henry Wall
Jean Hager	

Mary Thompson Fisher (left), a Chickasaw born in Tishomingo in 1895, was educated at the Oklahoma College for Women in Chickasha and Columbia University. She appeared on Broadway and in a number of productions elsewhere. Eventually she created a one-woman show in which she presented the legends, songs and history of her people. Her Chickasaw name "Te Ata" means "bearer of the morning." While traveling over the United States and Europe, she performed before President Roosevelt at the White House and King George VI in England.

(Photo courtesy of the Oklahoma Heritage Association.)

Women in the Arts

Go to *The Oklahoman Archives*. What stories can you find about Leona Pearl Mitchell; Joyce Carol Thomas; S. E. Hinton; Maria Tallchief? Do the stories concern the artist's art or something else? What? What do they tell you about these women? Write a brief account of them.

Your newspaper has a lot of entertainment stories, notices and advertisements for art shows, movies and concerts. What stars and performers interest you? Why? How many of them are women?

Eleanor Kirkpatrick was involved in the creation of several Oklahoma City museums. Imagine you could create a museum devoted to any subject. What kind of museum would it be? Write a short paper about what kind of exhibits you would have, what kind of people would come to your museum and why. What kind of things you would sell in the gift shop?

Creek-Seminole and Cherokee artist **Dana Tiger** has lived in Oklahoma all her life. She is a world recognized artist who draws on her Oklahoma Indian heritage and the strong women she has known for her inspiration. Through Tiger's paintings, many who have never seen Oklahoma see strong women and our unique landscape.

(Photo courtesy of the Women's Archives at Oklahoma State University.)

Women Promoting Civic and Educational Causes

The Community and Living sections of your newspaper contain stories about people working to make your community better. What sort of things are they doing? How many of them are women? Is there a difference between the causes women are involved in and those men are behind? What sort of things would you like to see done for your community?

Fast Facts

Americans are very generous. Over 67 percent of American households donate money to some cause. In 2005, gifts to charities were almost \$200 billion.

Which types of causes are most popular?

Research *Giving USA 2006* to find the answer.



Peggy Helmerich (left) of Tulsa began her career as a film actress starring with Jimmy Stewart in the classic "Harvey" but the former star is best known for her support of libraries in Tulsa and at the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University. For more than 20 years the Tulsa Library Trust has given the Peggy V. Helmerich Distinguished Author Award, which has brought some of the world's best writers to Tulsa for a fund-raising dinner to benefit libraries in the Tulsa City-County Library System. (Photo courtesy of the Women's Archives at Oklahoma State University.)



In 1910, **Mabel Bassett** (left) and her husband established one of Oklahoma's first charitable organizations for orphaned and neglected children, the Creek County Humane Society. In 1922, Bassett was elected Commissioner of Charities and Corrections and held the position for six terms through 1947. Bassett's administration was noted for its promotion of fair living conditions and opportunities for prison inmates. A women's correctional center in McLoud bears her name today. (Photo courtesy of the Research Division, Oklahoma Historical Society.)

In her professional life as chairman of First National Bank and Trust Co. of McAlester, **Wanda Bass** (below) worked hard to ensure women were recognized as bankers. To Bass, volunteering and giving back to the community were just as important — if not more so — than her business career. She was recognized for her donations to the arts and education in McAlester and around Oklahoma. A \$20-million gift to Oklahoma City University helped build the Wanda L. Bass Music Center, one of the finest performance centers in the country. (Photo courtesy of Oklahoma City University.)





Many president's and governor's wives help promote causes they feel passionate about. Oklahoma First Lady **Kim Henry** (above), a former school teacher, is passionate about reading and education. Here she is shown reading to a group of kindergarten students.

As vice president and then president of the Kerr Foundation, **Lou Kerr** (below) has helped organizations around Oklahoma and the country through her philanthropy and creative leadership. Under her guidance, the Kerr Foundation has given money to a wide variety of organizations that support the arts, education, medical research and youth programs. Kerr was a founder of the internationally acclaimed Red Earth Festival and chaired the Oklahoma Centennial Commission.

(Photo courtesy of the Women's Archives at Oklahoma State University.)



Test Your Knowledge!

Mabel Bassett (see p. 12) was the second woman to serve as Oklahoma Commissioner of Charities and Corrections. The first woman to serve in this position was also the first woman elected to a statewide office in Oklahoma. Who was she? (Hint: see p. 4.)

Answer: Kate Barnard

Fast Facts

In 2007, Harvard University announced that a woman, Dr. Drew G. Faust, would be its next president. A 2006 national survey found that 23 percent of America's college and university presidents are women.

Of Oklahoma's 28 public colleges and universities, seven have been headed by a woman:

Mrs. Kate Galt Zaneis, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, 1935–1937

Joe Anna Hibler, Southwestern Oklahoma State University, 1990–2001

Cindy Ross, Cameron University, 2002–present

JoAnn Haysbert, Langston University, 2005–present

Marlene Strathe, Interim President Oklahoma State University, 2007–2008

Janet Cunningham, Northwestern Oklahoma State University, 2007–present

Kim Cherry, Interim President, Northeastern Oklahoma State University, 2007–2008

Louise McMahan (above) of Lawton was one of the state's early philanthropists. She and her son Eugene established the McMahan Foundation, which provided support for humanitarian projects, education and the arts. (Photo courtesy of the Research Division, Oklahoma Historical Society.)



Although **Edith Kinney Gaylord** was a respected journalist and member of the board of directors of the Oklahoma Publishing Company, she has become best known in Oklahoma as a philanthropist who supported numerous statewide efforts to advance the causes of women, education and ethical journalism.

Women Take to the Skies

Go to *The Oklahoman* online. Search for stories about NASA, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. What are the stories about? Do they involve women? How?

There are many careers in aviation and aeronautics. One place to explore these careers is at: <http://www.khake.com/page 41.html>. Read about a few of these careers then go to the Classifieds section of the newspaper. Do you see any job ads for careers you have read about? Write about two of these jobs and why you would or would not be interested in doing this type of work.



Bessie Coleman was the first African American woman airplane pilot. Born into a family of thirteen children, Coleman managed to graduate from eighth grade and came to Oklahoma to study at Oklahoma Colored Agricultural and Normal University (Langston). However, she soon left for Chicago. Her desire was to be a pilot but American flight schools would not accept a black woman. She learned French and was accepted to a French flight school in 1920. She returned to the United States as a pilot and began to participate in air shows as a stunt pilot and skydiver. She also worked to let the African American community know about the great opportunities in aviation. In 1926, she was killed in an airplane crash. Such daring dreamers paved the way for women like Dr. Mae Jemison, the first black astronaut to fly in space. (Photo courtesy of Dr. Jilda Motley.)



In March 2003, **Rita Aragon** (above) became the first woman to command a state Air National Guard and the first female general officer of Native American descent (Cherokee and Choctaw) when she was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General. In 2005, she was promoted to the rank of Major General. Aragon joined the Oklahoma Air Guard in 1979 to supplement her teacher's income and received her officer's commission less than two years later. In 1984, she became an elementary school principal and served in this capacity until her retirement from the Oklahoma City Public Schools in 1996 when she went on active duty. Following the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, the Air National Guard sent Aragon to run the morgue for the bombing victims. (Photo courtesy of the Women's Archives at Oklahoma State University.)



Wynnewood's **Donna Shirley** (left) was flying solo in her teens. In college she studied aeronautical engineering. By 1966, Dr. Shirley was with NASA working on the first Mars mission and, before leaving NASA in 1998, she led the team which developed the Mars rover that broadcast to Earth in 1997. (Photo courtesy of the Women's Archives at Oklahoma State University.)

Fast Facts

Mary Haizlip met her husband, Jim, when she signed up to take flying lessons from him while he earned a degree at the University of Oklahoma. The second American woman to receive her commercial pilot's license, she held the world speed record for women for seven years clocking over 255 miles per hour. In 1982, she was the first woman pilot inducted into the Oklahoma Aviation and Space Hall of Fame.



A research psychologist for the United States Navy, **Dr. Gloria Twine Chisum** (above) became one of the world's leading authorities on vision problems associated with flying high performance aircrafts. The Muskogee native discovered ways to lessen the loss of vision jet pilots experience when they make sharp turns and helped develop goggles that protect the eyes of pilots who are exposed to bright bursts of light from lightening and other sources. In addition to her work as a scientist, Dr. Chisum has served on numerous educational and charitable organizations in her adopted city of Philadelphia. (Photo courtesy of Oklahoma Heritage Association.)

Fast Facts

The Ninety-Nines, Inc., is an international organization of licensed women pilots from 35 countries and it is headquartered in Oklahoma City at the Will Rogers World Airport. You can visit its museum of women pilots in person or get a taste of what is there by going to <http://www.museumofwomenpilots.com/>.

Sparked early by her father's interest in aviation, **Jerrie Cobb** received her pilot's license on her 17th birthday in 1948. After four years as a cargo pilot with Fleetway, she became chief pilot for Kansas City Flying Service. In 1960, Cobb began NASA testing and later was selected as America's first woman space pilot candidate. Hoping to be the first woman into space, Cobb was disappointed when her superior skill and performance with NASA was not rewarded with selection as an astronaut candidate. Cobb resigned from NASA and focused her flying skills on serving tribal peoples of South America. Friends formed the Jerrie Cobb Foundation to support her missionary work. Cobb has received numerous awards including Woman of the Year in Aviation. (Photo courtesy of the Research Division, Oklahoma Historical Society.)

Test Your Knowledge!

Which of the women featured on pages 14 and 15 was featured on a 32-cent U.S. postage stamp?

Bethany's Shannon Lucid holds three degrees from the University of Oklahoma. In 1979, Dr. Lucid became a NASA astronaut and has made five space flights totaling 223 days in space. She has the record for the most space flight in orbit for a non-Russian. On a 1996 mission she flew 75.2 million miles. (Photo courtesy of the Research Division, Oklahoma Historical Society.)



Girl Scouts Celebrate Oklahoma Women's History Month!

Girl Scouts is the preeminent organization for girls —
building girls of courage, confidence and character
to take on the world!

*Serving Girls In 39 Central & Western
Oklahoma Counties!*



Girl Scouts-Western Oklahoma, Inc.

121 NE 50th

Oklahoma City, OK 73115

405-528-3535 or 800-698-0022

www.gswestok.org

Mission Statement

The Junior League of Oklahoma City, Inc. is an organization of women committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women and improving the community through effective action and leadership of trained volunteers.

For over 80 years, the women of the Junior League of Oklahoma City have been at work serving our community. We are proud to be a partner in this year's National Women's History Month program which recognizes the accomplishments of the many diverse and inspirational women.



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