Women In the Law

Presented by:
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Radical Women 1832–1869

The American suffrage movement has its roots in the radical women reformers of the anti-slavery movement. Until the mid-nineteenth century, state law placed a married woman's earnings and property under her husband's control, and married women were not allowed to legally own and manage a business. As the awareness of such inequalities increased among abolitionist women, they banded together. Newly empowered, they set a radical goal: universal enfranchisement.
Suffragists faced searing losses in 1868 and 1870 when the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendment protections applied only to male citizens. Seeing formerly enslaved, illiterate black men earn the right to vote before them left many educated white women feeling appalled. Consequently, the suffrage movement split into two factions. One, the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA), led by Lucy Stone, supported universal suffrage for all. The other, the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA), was organized by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, both of whom—when forced to choose—preferred suffrage for white women.
9. Resolved, That it is the duty of the women of this country to secure to themselves their sacred right to the elective franchise.
Women Activists 1870–1892

During the 1871 elections, women marched to the polls in an attempt to vote. This daring new style of activism was called the "New Departure." The plan was: go vote, get arrested, and argue your theories in court. Roadblocks set up to counter the New Departure forced suffragists down other avenues of bold activism. Activists traveled the lecture circuit, promoting abolition, education reform and women's rights. Others chose to defy society's expectations of women by harnessing the power of the press, running for public office and public protest.
Wyoming is admitted to statehood and is the first state to grant women the right to vote in its constitution.
First woman’s presidential campaign

- Belva Ann Lockwood was the first woman to campaign for the presidency in 1884 and 1888.
- In 1880, she successfully argued in front of the United States Supreme Court for Cherokee land rights, being the first woman to appear before the Court.
1892

First woman's club for voting rights formed in Decatur by Ellen Hildreth.

Followed by:
- Calera
- Gadsden
- Tuskegee
- Huntsville
- Selma (1910)
- Birmingham (1910)

Alabama Equal Suffrage Association (1911)
The New Woman 1893–1912

In the 1890s, the New Woman emerged as a radical social force in American society. College educated, independent, and devoted to progressive reform—including suffrage—she awakened others to gender inequality. The suffrage movement gained traction out West and through state-by-state referendums. Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, Idaho, and Washington granted women’s suffrage. Meanwhile, women of color did not have the privilege of a single-issue. Yet African American women saw themselves as responsible agitators for change. They gained a public voice through their education and banded together to address basic human rights. Other women of color, including Native Americans, did not have U.S. citizenship and lobbied intensively to obtain it.
Birmingham Suffrage Efforts

- Downtown Reading Room & Free Public Lectures
- Distributed literature at state & county fairs, submitted newspaper articles
- Traveling Library
- Sponsored Debates and Essay Contests
- Voiceless Speech Demonstrations in Department Stores
Compelling Tactics 1913–1916

On March 3, 1913, thousands of American women made history as the first nonviolent political group to march on the capital en masse. Alice Paul introduced militancy to the women’s suffrage movement with compelling tactics like parades and protests. Her group split off from the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) and formed what eventually was called the National Woman’s Party (NWP). Paul and her followers focused on lobbying nationally for a federal amendment. By contrast, Carrie Chapman Catt, the leader of NAWSA, pursued the strategy of state-by-state referendums. Both groups continued to exclude women of color, who in turn persevered to work within their own frameworks for universal citizenship rights.
On March 3, 1913, American women marched on the capital before a crowd of more than 500,000. The procession concluded with the tableau Liberty and Her Attendants. Dedicated to the ideals of American womanhood, the performance took place on the steps of the Treasury Building. As trumpets sounded, Columbia, the female personification of the United States, summoned allegorical figures including Liberty, Justice, Charity, Peace, Plenty, and Hope.
Ida B. Wells

- In 1913, at the suffrage parade in Washington, D.C., Ida B. Wells refused to march in the back with the other African American women.
- Instead, she marched at the front of the Illinois suffrage delegation.
1915

- Alabama Women Suffrage Amendment on the state Ballot
- Sponsor J. H. Greene of Dallas County withdrew support at voting
- Balcony Full of Suffrage Supporters
- Fell 12 Votes Shy of 3/5 Majority
How the 1918 Flu Pandemic Helped Advance Women’s Rights

While the virus disproportionately affected young men, women stepped into public roles that hadn’t previously been open to them.
Militancy in the American Suffragist Movement 1917–1919

After the success of the 1913 Suffrage Procession, Alice Paul knew more parades and protests would draw media attention. Suffragists began protesting outside the White House in early 1917. By resisting and defying authority, these women distinguished themselves as nonviolent radicals. By targeting the White House, the suffragist picketers placed enormous pressure on President Woodrow Wilson. At the same time, the suffrage movement continued to perpetuate discrimination, not allowing African American women to take part in the militant actions. The picketers, through creating a relentless public presence, eventually won American sympathy, and Wilson finally offered public support. By late June 1919, both the House of Representatives and the Senate approved the federal suffrage amendment.
"Silent Sentinels" were the first to picket the White House, and they assembled every day from January 10, 1917, until the amendment was ratified on August 18, 1920. Their purple, cream, and gold banners were highly recognizable. For the first few months, the picketers amused President Wilson. However, after the United States entered World War I in April 1917, their presence had become embarrassing. The suffragists pointed out the hypocrisy of fighting for democracy and freedom in Europe while denying the vote to women at home. Beginning in June, District of Columbia police began arresting the suffragist picketers.
Martin L. Calhoun, of the Alabama Male Association Opposed to Woman's Suffrage, sent this letter to Senator Duncan U. Fletcher 9/23/1918 opposing the proposed 19th Amendment. He wrote that each state should "be permitted to solve the issue for itself," and asks "in all seriousness – what will become of white supremacy in the grand old South?"
May 19, 1919
Congress proposes “…an amendment to the Constitution extending the right of suffrage to women.”

June 4, 1919
Congress passes the 19th Amendment, sending it to the states for ratification.

Approval by two-thirds of the states is required for ratification.
A PROTEST AGAINST WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE.

Woman's Suffrage is the most dangerous blow aimed at the peace and happiness of the people of Alabama and white supremacy since the Civil War. If you don't believe this please read this pamphlet carefully. Why should the state be thrown into turmoil merely out of deference to the demands of a few ladies who are "drunk with excitement," and who do not realize, or else are blind to the awful results that would follow woman's suffrage in Alabama. While a few are loud in their clamorings, like the frogs in the mill pond, and the allusion is made with great respect there is no demand on the part of even an appreciable minority of the women of Alabama for Woman's Suffrage, and even the ranks of the advocates would be still further depleted if they knew just what the thing meant and led to. Regardless of the protestations of some to the contrary, it is openly claimed by leaders of the cause that the vote is really the least evil they seek,—that their end and aim, to which every effort will be bent, is full fledged citizenship, with all the duties and obligations of man, such as holding office, sitting on juries, etc., and that their efforts will be unceasing until the same is attained. It is not believed that either the white men or women of Alabama desire this or wish to lend it encouragement. Our law-makers should give it the stamp of their disapproval at this time. The inevitable end of equal suffrage is demoralization. The trouble is that innocent women, the silent, home loving women and children, who have not fostered the thing must suffer from it. It strikes a blow at the clearest, highest and most beautiful civilization on earth, and its effects are opposed to all the sacred traditions of the South. It will be granted at the expense of home and home life. Wherever tried, in its fullness, it has proven a failure. It is not be-
REPLY TO THE ANONYMOUS
"Protest Against Woman’s Suffrage in Alabama"

By the Alabama Equal Suffrage Association

TO THE ALABAMA LEGISLATURE:

A "Protest," bearing to signatures, has just been issued to the Alabama Legislature from some unknown source. Like the attacks of all enemies, it is a stab in the dark and under cover of darkness. Its purpose is to deceive honest men from the discharge of their duty to Democracy and also to their constituents who have asked them to vote for the Woman Suffrage Bill in the Legislature.

This bill simply provides that the electors be permitted to decide at the next general election whether or not the qualified women of Alabama shall be enfranchised. At the general election other constitutional amendments will also be voted on, and this equal suffrage amendment will incur no additional expense.

The so-called pamphlet charges: "She (that is, the suffragist) demands that women sit on our nurses." We are demanding nothing—we are asking for suffrage. Everyone knows that a few men and all persons who are wise and suffrage as a women's right, a right for Negro suffrage it is a fight for WOMAN suffrage. The women of Alabama are willing to answer to the same requirements exacted of Alabama men in terms of education, support of government, and patriotism. But an innate sense of fairness on the part of any honest person would rule out any being regarded a disqualification.

Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, who so greatly dismaying in this pamphlet, is a minister of the gospel, a woman who has devoted her life to the humane solution of the problems affecting the lives of the unprotected women of this country, and it remains for an anonymous source to cast aspersions upon a name which already has a place in the foremost ranks of the honorable men and women of this country. THE CHARGES IN THIS PAMPHLET REGARDING DR. SHAW ARE FALSE, AND SHE HAS REPUDIATED THEM. THE CHARGES IN THE PAMPHLET AGAINST OTHER PROMINENT SUFFRAGISTS, EMANATING FROM AN ANTI-SUFFRAGE SOURCE, ARE EQUALLY UNFOUNDED AND UNTRUE.

IN CONCLUSION, IT MUST BE HORNED IN MIND THAT THE QUESTION FOR THE ALABAMA LEGISLATURE TO DECIDE NOW IS NOT ONE OF SUFFRAGE OR ANTI-SUFFRAGE, BUT WHETHER THE VOTERS OF THIS STATE HAVE THE RIGHT TO EXPECT THAT SO GREAT A PUBLIC QUESTION AS THIS SHALL BE DECIDED BY THEM AT THIS PULPIT.

We insist that the so-called pamphlet should be relegated to the wastepaper basket, with the contempt usually bestowed upon anonymous communications.

Respectfully submitted,

Alabama Equal Suffrage Association.
ALABAMA DID NOT RATIFY 19th AMENDMENT

State Legislators Rejected Any Infringement on Their Authority from Federal Government
August 18, 1920

Tennessee 36th State to Ratify

Giving American Women the RIGHT TO VOTE
The Nineteenth Amendment and Its Legacy

The history of American women’s suffrage exposes deep social divisions along racial lines as well as a flawed and convoluted history of American governance. Although women of color were repeatedly ignored by white suffragists, they kept fighting for their own rights. Native American activists lobbied for decades for U.S. citizenship, which they finally received in 1924. Similarly, Puerto Rican women gained full suffrage in 1935. African Americans and other people of color could not vote unimpeded until 1965. Even today, restrictive voter identification laws target African American and Native American citizens in specific regions. Yet as the 2016 Presidential election and the 2017 United States Senate special election in Alabama have demonstrated, the collective vote of specific blocks of women has come to wield enormous influence in American governance. Moreover, women, who had no political voice one hundred years ago, now serve in the American government in historic numbers. Today, more than 120 women are serving in the 116th Congress.
Upon the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, illustrator Elmer Andrews Bushnell represented the opportunities now open to enfranchised women. A young working class woman suddenly has access to a future she never had before. She looks up from the base of a ladder that ascends toward the sky. The bottom rungs, labeled “Slavery” and “House Drudgery,” are the subject’s first hurdles. The next rungs are labeled with careers typical for women in the early twentieth century. At the top, the last step delineates what, for many American women, symbolizes the pinnacle of political equality: “Presidency.”
September 8, 1953

Alabama Legislature

*Finally* Ratified

the Women’s Suffrage Amendment
The Nineteenth Amendment did not remove racist Jim Crow laws that sought to obstruct African American civil rights. In 1961, Fannie Lou Hamer and seventeen others went to the courthouse in Indianola, Mississippi, to vote. They were told that they could only register two at a time and they would need to pass a literacy test to vote. Hamer, who had left school at age twelve to work to help support her family, failed the literacy test. She gained national attention for her eloquent testimony before the credentials committee of the 1964 Democratic National Convention, which brought the issue of African American civil rights to a national television audience. Her speech also galvanized President Lyndon B. Johnson to sign the 1965 Voting Rights Act.
1965 Voting Rights Act

- DOJ sought to enforce the Reconstruction Amendments
- 70 voting rights cases filed between 1957 and 1965, including cases in Elmore, Sumter, & Perry counties
- Helped expose the chasm between the objectives of the 15th Amendment and the practices of southern voter registrars by showing that a simple requirement of racial neutrality wasn’t enough to guard against discrimination
- VRA adopted many of the stringent remedies from these trials, including the appointment of federal officials to observe elections and maintain lists of eligible voters and the need for federal approval for changes in local voting procedures
March 22, 1972

Congress passed the Equal Rights Amendment

“Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.”
Women's Suffrage History

Presented by the Alabama State Bar

The Alabama State Bar is proud to celebrate the 100-year anniversary of Congress's passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, guaranteeing all American women the right to vote. From the early 1800s, women across the country organized, wrote, and protested in favor of equal voting rights.

It was not until 1878 that an amendment guaranteeing women's suffrage was introduced to Congress. On June 4, 1919, Congress passed what became the 19th Amendment, readying it for ratification by the states on August 18, 1920. Here, we chronicle the history of women's suffrage across the world, and share some of the best written and visual resources on the American journey to women's voting rights.

Read, listen and learn more about women's suffrage »

Watch The Fight for the Noblest Democracy now »
Managing Shareholder of Baker Donelson
Birmingham Office

THE FIGHT FOR THE NOBLEST DEMOCRACY
WOMEN’S SUFFRAGE IN ALABAMA

a short documentary by Jenna M. Bedsole
Huntsville, AL Pomeroy Marker
National Media Coverage

By Lindsay Hinkle  |  June 30, 2021  |  No Comments

The marker dedication in Huntsville, Alabama, received nationwide coverage from Connecticut to Kentucky to Arkansas to California to Washington. To read the remarks of Executive Director of the Historic Huntsville Foundation Donna Castellano, click here.

https://www.waaytv.com/content/video/574456582.html (See and hear NCWHS President Marsha Weinstein speak at the dedication of this marker.)


Donna Castellano, executive director of the Historic Huntsville Foundation, unveils a marker noting Huntsville’s role in the women’s suffrage movement. She is joined by Huntsville Mayor Tommy Battle, Rebekah McKinney, Janet Watson, and Marsha Weinstein. McKinney and Watson are the owners of the historic YMCA building on Greene Street where the marker was placed, while Weinstein is president of the National Collaborative for Women’s History Sites.
Birmingham
WOMEN’S ISSUES within political party platforms

https://pudding.cool/projects/votes-for-women/
Public Law 100-9
100th Congress
Joint Resolution

To designate the month of March, 1987, as "Women’s History Month".

Whereas American women of every race, class, and ethnic background have made historical contributions to the growth and strength of the Nation in countless recorded and unrecorded ways;
Whereas American women have played and continue to play a critical economic, cultural, and social role in every sphere of our Nation’s life by constituting a significant portion of the labor force working in and outside of the home;
Whereas American women have played a unique role throughout our history by providing the majority of the Nation’s volunteer labor force and have been particularly important in the establishment of early charitable philanthropic and cultural institutions in this country;
Whereas American women of every race, class, and ethnic background served as early leaders in the forefront of every major progressive social change movement, not only to secure their own right of suffrage and equal opportunity, but also in the abolitionist movement, the emancipation movement, the industrial labor movement, the civil rights movement, and other movements to create a more fair and just society for all; and
Whereas, despite these contributions, the role of American women in history has been consistently overlooked and undervalued in the body of American history: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the month of March, 1987, is designated as "Women’s History Month", and the President is requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe such month with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

When the Wisconsin Supreme Court refused to admit Laura Goodell to the Wisconsin bar in 1875, no one could have foreseen the progress which women would make in the legal profession in the next 115 years. The 1875 case marked only the first female attorneys in the United States. And in April of 1973, the United States Supreme Court had rejected Mary Bradwell's claim that the right to practice law should be acknowledged as one of the privileges and immunities of United States citizenship. Today, women are entering the state's law schools in numbers almost equal to men. These women will learn the law from a growing number of female law professors and deans. Women are becoming increasingly involved in all areas of legal practice, from the traditional areas of domestic relations and child custody disputes to personal injury and corporate litigation. Today, women comprise about 38 percent of the members of the Alabama State Bar.

This article provides a small glimpse into the lives of nine women lawyers in Alabama. This article does not chronicle the lives of Alabama's most noted women lawyers, such a task would indeed be impossible. There are many, many women not mentioned here who have contributed greatly to our profession and to the progress of Alabama women in the practice of law. The following nine women are simply examples of those who have, quietly, yet earnestly, paved the way for the women lawyers of today.

Their stories are not filled with complaints of mistreatment. They refuse to describe themselves as pioneers in a man's world. In her own unique way, each woman accepted the situation presented to her and did her part to ensure that the path of future women lawyers would be smoother.

All of these women had male mentors or role models who encouraged and supported their efforts to join the legal profession. All of these women faced the ever-present dilemma of balancing their careers with the needs of their families. They all entered the world of law with a different perspective - not simply because they are women, but because their life experiences differed from those of men. The injection of that different perspective into the legal profession can only strengthen it. The Alabama State Bar is stronger for its 1,854 women members. The following nine women at least partially explain why.
Maude McLure Kelly

"The only thing of which I am very proud is that I opened the door to the active, actual practice of law here [in Alabama] to women. All other things I did were minor. They were to be done and nearly was easier and quicker to do them than to get out of doing them."

Born in Mountain Spring, Alabama in 1897, Maude McLure Kelly was the paternal granddaughter of Colonel Samuel Canso Kelly, who commanded a unit known as Kelly's Infantry during the Civil War. Colonel Kelly quickly restored his family's fortune after the war and his son, Richard Bussey Kelly, enjoyed a fine education, attending Oxford College in Oxford and receiving a law degree with highest honors from the University of Alabama.

Laura Bledsoe's widowed mother had sold the family plantation in Searcy to enable her to educate her daughters. Laura met Richard Kelly at Oxford College and they married. Maude Kelly was one of their nine children. She grew up surrounded by servants, good books, and many other luxuries. From age five to 18, Maude attended Noble Institute, a private school in Anniston.

Meanwhile, Richard Kelly was enjoying political success as a member of the Alabama Legislature from 1894-1895 and as chancellor of the Northeastern Chambers from 1896-1900. In 1904, Kelly lost an election for associate justice of the Supreme Court of Alabama.

Maude Kelly graduated from Noble in 1904. Because Judge Kelly had allowed his financial situation to deteriorate, he moved his law practice and family to Birmingham in 1899. When her father opened his new office, 16-year-old Maude began to work as his stenographer. Quickly, she began to shed law in her spare time. She read law with her father until the fall of 1907, when she took the entrance examination for the law department at the University of Alabama. She did so well on the test that she was placed in the senior class. As the second woman admitted to the law department, Kelly was elected vice-president of the Beta Club of the debating society and class historian. By the end of the year, she graduated third in her class of 23. She had a class average of 95 percent and received her degree with highest honors.

At the time she entered the law department, Kelly did not know whether she would be allowed to practice after her graduation. At that time, the Code of Alabama stated that anyone who presented his diploma from the University of Alabama would be permitted to try cases. On November 26, 1907, Kelly's friend and classmate, John McDuffie, introduced a bill before the Alabama Legislature that changed the wording of the code section to read "his or her diploma. The bill passed despite heated opposition.

Women had been attending law school in the United States since 1869. And even though many women graduated from accredited law schools, many state bar associations refused to admit women lawyers until years later. The American Bar Association did not admit a female lawyer until 1902, and this was only after the Association postponed consideration of her application for one year because the members needed time to consider "the grave consequences of admitting a woman." When Kelly sought the right to practice law in Alabama, the states of Texas, Virginia, Arkansas, Georgia and Mississippi still forbade women to practice law.

Kelly established an office next to that of her father and began the practice of law. Immediately after being admitted to the Alabama State Bar on October 7, 1908, Kelly appeared in court to represent her first client. When that client did not pay her fee, Kelly withdrew her representation of him.

One of the most serious problems Kelly encountered was the reluctance of juries to allow her to see clients. Kelly thus began to wear a long black robe and a black muffler which seemed somehow to give her gravity. She began to take on more serious cases, and in 1909, the Montgomery Messenger reported a case in which Kelly assisted the state's attorney.

On September 23, 1909, appeared in the courthouse for the first time in the history of Montgomery County a woman lawyer, actually engaged in trying a case before a jury.

That unusual distinction fell to Miss Maude McLure Kelly of Birmingham, a vivacious young woman who has chosen the exacting profession of law for her life's occupation...

First of all, it must be said that her manner in addressing was most genial and gracious, touched with enough embarrassment to mark her nervousness. Old habits of the soul complemented her handling of the facts very brightly. Most of the jury rumbled and while waiting for a verdict, Miss Kelly was asked for an interview for the Woman's Page of the Advertiser. In a businesslike manner she offered her card and it carries the earmarks of businesslike directness, phone number, name of office, and so forth.

In July 1909, Kelly was appointed to the Alabama State Bar as the only woman member and as the only woman lawyer practicing in the state. Encouraged by this acceptance, Kelly decided to apply for admission to the bar of the United States Supreme Court. With the help of her father's good friend, William Jennings Bryan, then Secretary of State, Kelly became admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court on February 22, 1914, thus becoming the first woman admitted to that as a practicing lawyer in the South.

Kelly often became frustrated by the inequality she observed in the legal system. Describing her early years in practice she wrote: A man may be able to get by with a poorly prepared case, without subsequent ill effect but a woman cannot because she is more closely observed. I knew I went into court with a poorly prepared case, or was not so well prepared for every possible eventuality that I could not be caught "off base." The penalty would also be paid by the women who came after me to the bar.

Kelly's interest in women's rights was reflected by her participation in the Birmingham Equal Suffrage Association which she organized along with Ethel Arens and Dr. Anna McCollum. In Birmingham, she later became a charter member of the Alabama Equal Suffrage Association. In 1913 the Alabama Association intensified its efforts to secure the suffrage issue which would allow the people of Alabama to vote on the suffrage issue. This legislative campaign was unsuccessful. Believing somehow that her work in Washington would keep
A native of Cullman, Annie Lola Price was forced to seek employment at age 18 after her only surviving parent died. She worked as a stenographer in the law office of Griffith & Brown. It was during this period that she read law, which was still an accepted method of legal education. She passed the Alabama bar in 1928, and actively practiced law in Cullman until 1935. After work each day she took pilot lessons at the Cullman School of Aviation and received her pilot’s license in

THE ALABAMA LAWYER
Mabel Yerby Lawson

Mabel Yerby Lawson graduated from the University of Alabama School of Law in 1926. She was reared by her father, William E. Yerby, who was a lawyer and publisher of the Greensboro (Alabama) newspaper. After completing law school, Miss Yerby practiced law with her father in Greensboro. She became the first woman lawyer to defend an accused murderer in Alabama. (She was acquitted.) She married James Lawson in 1925. She retired from the practice of law to raise three children. Her daughter remembers her mother as being devoted to her family, yet very much her own person. Devoted as she is practicing law, she also taught English and public speaking at Auburn University, and her four years had students in English.

Janie Ledlow Shores

Justice Janie Shores was born in 1932 in Butler County. As a very young child, she picked strawberries alongside her mother, sister, and many others, black and white, in the fields of Butler County. After Pearl Harbor, her family moved to Lookout in Baldwin County. At the age of eleven, she and her sister, Veril, picked potatoes for a nickel a basket, earning as much as $3 a day. Her mother, Willie, worked as a waitress and later as a telephone operator, earning $20 to $30 a week. Her father, John, was sent by the Navy for basic training in Georgia and was later shipped out to the Pacific, where he served until the end of the war.

Justice Shores continued to work during her teenage years, time in the potato sheds as a sister and harbor as a server, then as a waitress. Her father returned from the war and went back to work in the potato sheds. In 1945, her brother, Larry, was born, and she and her sister left school at noon to babysit him while their parents worked.

In 1954, before graduating from Robertsdale High School, Justice Shores heard a radio on the radio every Saturday to look for a job in a law office. In April of that year, she was offered a job by Vincent Kilborn at the law firm of Outlaw, Seale & Kilborn in Mobile. She worked full-time for eight years, and she now states that those four years were the most significant years of her life.
The Rise of Women in State Legislatures: A State-by-State Map

More women than ever are serving in state legislatures. But an interview with the longest-serving woman legislator reveals just how slow change has been in bringing an end to gender inequities in statehouses.

March 10, 2021 • Carl Smith
87 women serve in leadership roles nationwide in State Legislatures.

Nevada – 60.3% of lawmakers are women.

2,259 women serve in 50 State Legislatures
(1,509 – Democrats
729 – Republicans)
Note: This graphic was updated to reflect the number of female legislators in North Dakota.
Source: National Conference of State Legislatures
How Many Women Are Serving in the Alabama House of Representatives?

How Many Women Are Serving in the Alabama State Senate?

Of these representatives, how many are attorneys?
Cynthia Almond becomes first woman in Legislature to represent Tuscaloosa

Jason Morton  The Tuscaloosa News
Published 8:57 a.m. CT Oct 22, 2021

Tuscaloosa officially has a new state legislator.

And she is already making history.

Rep. Cynthia Lee Almond, R-Tuscaloosa, was sworn in to represent the Alabama House District 63 on Wednesday.

She takes over for former Rep. Bill Poole, R-Tuscaloosa, who vacated the seat Aug. 1 to become Alabama’s next finance director after having been named to the position by Gov. Kay Ivey.

And in doing so, she becomes the first
Justice Kelli Wise, a graduate of Prattville High School, received a B.S. in Biology, with a minor in Nursing, from Auburn University and a Juris Doctorate from Jones School of Law. She later earned a Master of Public Administration from Auburn University Montgomery where Justice Wise was the recipient of the 2005 Outstanding Graduate Award by the AUM Department of Political Science and Public Administration. Recently, Justice Wise was honored to be named as one of AUM’s Top 40 Graduates during the University’s 40th Anniversary Celebration.

During her legal career, Justice Wise worked in the Governor’s Legislative Office, served as legal counsel for ProStaff HRM, Inc., and was associated with the law firms of John Taber & Associates and Pittman, Pittman, Carwie & Fuquay. Prior to her election to the bench, she served as a staff attorney on the Court of Criminal Appeals and the Alabama Supreme Court. Justice Wise was first elected to the Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals in 2000 becoming the youngest woman ever elected to sit on an Alabama Appellate Court. She was re-elected in 2006 and was later selected to serve as Presiding Judge of the Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals. Justice Wise was elected to the Supreme Court of Alabama in 2010 and is assigned to the Stuart Division.


Justice Wise and her husband, former Montgomery County District Court Judge Arthur Ray, are the proud parents of Hanah-Mathis, a sophomore at St. James School. They are active members of St. James United Methodist Church.
Sarah Hicks Stewart, a long-time resident of Mobile, was elected in November 2018 to serve as an Associate Justice on the Alabama Supreme Court. She is the daughter of Reginald and Suzanne Hicks. Her only brother, Charlie Hicks, was an attorney in Mobile until his untimely death in 2014. Justice Stewart and her family lived all over the world for the majority of her childhood while her father worked as a petroleum geologist.

In 1981, Justice Stewart graduated from Union High School in Tulsa, Oklahoma; she earned a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Arts in Communication at the University of Arkansas in 1985 and 1986. While in college, she was a member of Kappa Alpha Theta, Mortar Board, Omicron Delta Kappa, and Order of Omega and served as president of the Student Government Association her senior year. In 1992, Justice Stewart earned her J.D. from Vanderbilt Law School where she was vice president of the Law Student Association.

After graduating from Vanderbilt, Justice Stewart practiced law with Hand Arendall LLC, Ezell & Sharbrough LLC, and finally with her brother, Charlie. As a lawyer, Justice Stewart was the first female president of the Mobile Young Lawyers and served on many local and state bar committees. Justice Stewart was appointed a circuit judge in the 13th Judicial Circuit by Governor Riley in 2006 and ran for the position three times unopposed. As a circuit judge, Justice Stewart handled thousands of civil and criminal cases, ranging from simple car wrecks to multi-million dollar business disputes and from possession of marijuana to capital murder. During her 13 years as a circuit judge, Justice Stewart served as the co-chair on Professionalism in the Bench and Bar, on the Supreme Court’s standing committee on the Alabama Rules of Evidence, and on many other Alabama State Bar and judicial committees. Justice Stewart was active in the leadership of the Circuit Judges Association, serving as Education Chair for eight years and was elected by her fellow judges in July 2018 as the first female president of the Circuit Judges Association.

Justice Stewart has been active in the Mobile community as a member of Leadership Mobile, Junior League of Mobile, 15 Place Homeless Service Center Board, Girl Scouts of the Magic Empire Board, and Ashland Place Methodist Church.

Justice Stewart is married to Craig Richard Stewart originally of Selma. Craig is a manager for Express Oil. They have two children, Mariah Suzanne Stewart 22, who, after graduating Phi Beta Kappa from Millsaps College, is in the process of applying for a PhD program in cancer DNA research; and Charlene Rachel Stewart 19, who, after graduating as valedictorian from UMS High School in Mobile, is attending Hendrix College as a Provost Scholar.
Christy Olinger Edwards grew up on a small family farm in West Alabama. She was elected to the Alabama Court of Civil Appeals in November 2018.

Judge Edwards is a 2004 graduate of the University of Alabama’s Culverhouse College of Business, where she studied Finance and Economics, and is a 2008 graduate of Faulkner University’s Thomas Goode Jones School of Law. In 2014, she graduated cum laude from the University of Alabama School of Law with an LL.M. in Taxation.

Judge Edwards has served the people of Alabama for most of her legal career. In September 2016, she was appointed by the Governor as an associate judge of the Alabama Tax Tribunal. Before serving as a judge on the tax tribunal, she was an assistant attorney general and served as legal and policy advisor to the commissioners of the Alabama Department of Revenue. Before joining the Department, she served as an attorney for the Alabama Court of Civil Appeals.

Judge Edwards is the youngest statewide-elected official who is currently serving, and is the youngest female ever elected to an Alabama appellate court.

Judge Edwards has had articles published in national journals regarding taxation, and she has traveled the state and country speaking about state and local taxation. She is a member of the committee on the Alabama Rules of Professional Conduct and of the committee on the Alabama Canons of Judicial Ethics.
Other Facts about Women in the Law

• Women make up more than 50% of the law school attendees since 2016 and were 54.1% of the class in 2021.

• But women only compose only 47% of the associates in law firms, are 31% of the non-equity partners, 21% of the equity partners and 19% of the managing partners.

• In 2020, female associates made 91% of the income of their male colleagues. Women equity partners make 82% of the income of the male colleagues. Overall, women currently make $0.82 on the dollar compared to men.

• As of August 2020, 86% of lawyers were non-Hispanic white people, whereas 60% of the U.S. residents are non-Hispanic white people.

• Only 5% of all lawyers are Black, the same percentage as 10 years ago, while 13.4% of the population is Black. Hispanics lawyers experience the same disparity as 5% of all lawyers are Hispanic although 18.5% of the population is Hispanic and 2% of all lawyers are Asian, while almost 6% of the U.S. population is Asian.

Special Thanks to Sandy Reiss. Excerpted from her “How to Attract Women Lawyers To Your Firm and Keep Them” article.

• Patrick Smith, There Are More Women Lawyers Than Ever, and They’re Not Pleased with Legal Industry Norms, The American Lawyer (July 29, 2021, 12:01 a.m.)
• Id.
• Id.
• Id.
More Facts con’d

- When asked if gender diversity is a priority at their firm, 88% of men said it was compared to 55% of women.
- When asked if their firm has successfully retained experienced women attorneys, 74% of men thought yes, while only 47% of women agreed.
- Only 11% of men thought they had been snubbed for advancement due to their sex, while 53% of women thought so.
- Just 4% of men thought they have been denied a salary increase because of their gender, while 54% of women thought so.
- Men felt satisfied 71% of the time regarding proper recognition of their work. For women, it was 50%.
- 75% of women said they had experienced a demeaning comment, story or joke in the office. For men, it was just 6%.

*** All of the numbers for women cited above, are higher for women of color and black women are always at the bottom in studies of career advancement, treatment and pay.

Id.
### Recent Women Bar Passage Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Admit Year</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Admitted via Exam</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>48.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>51.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total for 2020</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>340</td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>50.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>49.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total for 2021</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>357</td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pandemic Impact on Women

- Mothers working full-time spend 50% more time each day caring for children than fathers work full-time.

- Since the onset of the pandemic, women in heterosexual dual-career couples who have children also reported larger increases in their time spent on household responsibilities.

- 17% of all working women rely on childcare and schools to keep their children safe while they work, in comparison to 12% of all men.

- In 2021, 42% of women felt often or almost always burned out compared to 32% of men.

- In 2020, 55% of men say they are very satisfied with the division of chores in their household, compared to 38% of women. The gap grew over the results in 2019.

- 59% of women say they do more household chores than their spouse and 46% of men say the responsibilities are shared equally.

- 74% of mothers say they do more to manage children's schedules and activities than their spouse or partner, while 63% of men believe that the responsibilities with regard to children are shared equally.
Pandemic Impact on Women con’d

• One out of four women who became unemployed during the pandemic reported the job loss was due to lack of childcare, twice the rate of men surveyed.

• Women with kids under the age of 10 considered the leaving the workplace during the pandemic at a rate 10 times higher than men who were similarly situated.

• Many women who have reached vice-president or c-suite level have dropped out of the work force during the pandemic to assist with children because they have the resources to do so.

  • *Id.* at Nicole Batemen.
  • *Id.* at Seven charts that show COVID-19s impact on women’s employment.
*New Name:
The Women’s Foundation Of Alabama

wfalabama.org
Key findings include:

• Women with children who wish to enter the workforce face steep child care costs: the annual cost for an infant (under 12 months old) in Alabama is $5,858, nearly 17 percent of women’s median annual earnings.

• The gender wage gap in Alabama is wider than in most states and the national average. Women in Alabama earn only 73 cents for every dollar a man earns, compared to 82 cents for U.S. women overall.

• Women make up 15.7 percent of the Alabama Legislature (22 out of 140 members). On average, women make up 29.2 percent of a state’s legislature.

• Women in Alabama are more likely than men to have filed for unemployment during the COVID-19 pandemic, accounting for 57.3 percent of total claims.

• Approximately 37.5 percent of Alabama women have experienced sexual assault, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner.
• Women in Alabama are entrepreneurial: they are slightly more likely to own their own business compared with women in the U.S. (37 percent versus 36 percent, respectively).

• Women in Alabama are more likely to live in poverty as compared with women in the U.S. In general, almost 18 percent of women in Alabama compared with 15 percent of women in the U.S.

• The annual cost of child care for an infant (under 12 months old) in Alabama is $5,658, close to 17 percent of women’s median annual earnings.

• Women in Alabama are less likely to have a bachelor’s degree or higher than women in the U.S. overall (25 percent and 30 percent, respectively).

• In 2017, there were 102 pregnancy-related deaths and 2,480 infant deaths in Alabama.

• Eighty-six percent of Alabama women ages 18-64 are covered by health insurance.

• One out of four Alabama women (25 percent) holds a university degree (bachelor’s degree or higher), a higher share than for Alabama men (24 percent).

• Of the 140 members of the Alabama Legislature, 22 are women (18 Representatives and 4 Senators) (15.7 percent).

• With 25 women serving, women make up 7 percent of the 37 Alabama county commissions.

• In Alabama as of September 1, 2020, 55.5 percent of the individuals who tested positive for COVID-19 were women and 47.9 percent of deaths related to COVID-19 were women.8

• In August 2020 amid the COVID-19 pandemic, unemployment was 5.6 percent in Alabama. Of the unemployment claims, 57.3 percent of claims were made by women and 53.5 percent of claims were made by individuals who are Black.8

**Women’s earnings are essential to the economic security of their families.** With a fair and equitable wage, access to educational opportunities, and proper health care, women can move themselves and their families forward. Additionally, higher numbers of women in government and as business leaders could also lead to an increase in policies and practices that strengthen families, communities, and the entire state of Alabama.
Do’s & Don’ts for Attracting and Retaining Female Talent

DON’T:

• Make remarks/jokes that would not be said in front of your Grandmother/Mother
• No Show participation (window dressing)
• Physical space
• Do not violate your Sexual Harassment Policy and Workplace Guidelines
• Talk Over / Fail to include in the conversation
• How do you want your Mother, Sister or Daughter to be treated?
• Other?
Do’s & Don’ts for Attracting and Retaining Female Talent

**DO:**
- Respect
- Consistent access for development
- Independent evaluation of workplace
- Mix Up Traditional roles
- Promote Work/Life balance (remote work policies)
- Safe environment to express negative feelings
- Diverse vendors
- Be fair
- Include at the table
- Other?
In 2120, what contributions will women recognize that our generation made?