

Women in Politics

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Women know that increasing representation in government can and will empower women all over the world.

In 1954, The United Nations Convention on the Political Rights of Women

went into force. Women finally earned the equal right to vote and hold

office. Let's take a brief look at women

over the years that held office and set the stage for the rest of us.

Jeannette Pickering Rankin was an American politician and women's rights

advocate and the first woman to hold federal office in the United States. She

was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives as a Republican from Montana

in 1916, and again in 1940.

It is believed that the first female elected to office of mayor was Susanna Madora Saltes of Arizona in 1887. She was one of the first women elected to any political office in the United States.

In 1980, Eunice

Sato was the first Asian American woman to serve as mayor of a major American

city. She was mayor of Long Beach, CA.

Lelia Foley -Davis

was elected mayor of Taft, OK in 1973 making her the nation's first elected

black woman mayor.

According to Our State archives, the first woman to become

mayor in N.C. was Katherine Mayo Cowan who took over her husband's term when he died in office in Wilmington in 1924.

The first woman to be elected mayor in N.C. was Annie Koonce Jenkins of Maysville in Jones County in 1925.

Isabella Cannon made history in 1977 when she became the first female elected mayor of Raleigh. She had never considered politics or run for any office before her election.

Ann Wrenn Jones was the first female elected as mayor of Whiteville. As quoted in news articles, her victory 'changed the political history of the Columbus County town.' Mrs. Jones served two terms.

In 2019, 295 women represent 20.9% of the 1,412 women mayors (with cities with population over 30,000) in America. This 20.9% includes:

- Nancy McFarlane – Raleigh
- Esther Manheimer – Asheville
- Pam Hemminger -Chapel Hill
- A.C. Heggins -Salisbury

Women are always on the front lines in communities, organizing rallies, registering voters, and knocking on doors. No doubt that in ten years, the current 20.9% of women mayors will double, even triple. Today, there is a record number of women candidates running for President and serving in Congress. I can say that we have truly earned our right to hold office.

Martha Stevens, Chairperson

Columbus County Republican Women