



Photo: The Statehouse Files

Phyllis Pond

New Haven, Allen County

October 25, 1930 – September 22, 2013

Phyllis Pond spent thirty-six years in the Indiana House of Representatives, serving from 1979 until her death in 2013. The longest serving woman in Indiana's history, she broke barriers when she became the first woman to sit in the front row at the Indiana House Chamber in 2005, a spot reserved for those with seniority.

Phyllis Pond's career is a testament of her ability to help others. Initially, wanting to become a doctor when women were discouraged from pursuing such professions, she became a teacher – and then a politician, representing Indiana citizens in northeast Indiana. She lost her first election in 1976. Instead of giving up, she ran again two later years and spent her next campaign contacting all of the precinct chairmen and vice chairmen in the district. She took the time to get to know them and answer their questions. She even left them boxes of scratch pads and pencils with her name and photo on them. As a kindergarten teacher, she taught half the day and then spent the other half and weekends campaigning. Because of her efforts, Pond won that election, and won every election afterwards.

Many key pieces of legislation she worked on focused on improving Hoosiers livelihood and education. She was the original author of the Primetime educational bill to lower class sizes to 18 in kindergarten through third grade. If the class size is larger than 18, the class is to be provided a part or full time teacher's aide. She also authored the CLEO law which developed a plan to assist minority students to attend law school and become lawyers.

In August 2013, Pond announced her retirement from the Indiana House of Representatives effective October 15, 2013. However, she died just three weeks before her retirement was to take effect.

- For more information about Phyllis Pond, go to: http://kpcnews.com/article_f959290a-200a-5812-afb0-bc48f936d948.html?TNNNoMobile,
- For more information about *Writing Her Story*, go to: <http://www.in.gov/icw/2440.htm>.

Additional and more detailed references available at the end of Women's History Month

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