



Women Enter Indiana's Election Process

Sources:

- Cavinder, Fred D., *The Indiana Book of Records, Firsts, and Fascinating Facts*, IU Press. *The Daily Republican* (20 November 1920) (<http://www.newspapers.com/newspage/81792535/>)
- Bodenhamer, David and Robert G. Barrows, *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis* (1994)
- Indiana Commission for Women, *Hoosier Women Lead* (<http://www.in.gov/icw/2415.htm>)



Photo Sources (L-R): Julia Nelson (*Indiana State Archives*), Arcada Stark Balz (*Indiana State Archives*), Grace Urbahns (*the Indiana Album*); Daisy Riley Lloyd (*Indiana Legislator Database*)

Women did not have the right to vote until 1920. Women and the men who supported them fought for the right to vote for many years prior to the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. Over a twenty-year period (1890-1920) in Indiana, there were at least ten women suffrage bills proposed to the Indiana General Assembly. All were either rejected or left to die in committee. Finally, on January 16, 1920, Indiana ratified the Nineteenth Amendment and became law in August 1920 after Tennessee became the thirty-sixth state to pass the Amendment into law.

In Indiana, women did not waste time and began participating in the political process. According to *The Indiana Book of Records, Firsts, and Fascinating Facts*, Mrs. Anna D. Monroe of Indianapolis became the first woman to cast her ballot on November 2, 1920 and was joined by more than 500,000 women. After that election, Julia D. Nelson (1862-1936) of Delaware County became the first woman to serve in the Indiana General Assembly when she was selected to replace Representative J. Clark McKinley who died shortly before the November 1920 election. In November 1942, Arcada Stark Balz (1879-1973) became the first woman to serve in the Indiana State Senate when she was elected to represent Marion and Johnson Counties. She took her seat at the start of the 1943-45 legislative session and was re-elected in 1944, serving another four-year term. In 1965, Daisy Riley Lloyd became the first African-American woman to be elected to the Indiana House of Representatives and to serve in the Indiana General Assembly.

Grace B. Urbahns was the first woman to serve in a state-level executive office when she was appointed to State Treasurer in 1926 after her husband, Bernhardt Urbahns, died in office. She was later elected and served until 1932. The second woman to hold a state-level elected office wasn't elected until 1961 when Dorothy Gardner was elected to State Auditor.