

II. CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF WOMAN SUFFRAGE IN COLORADO

The Celebration Coalition.

Although the League of Women Voters was not founded until 1920, its roots in the Woman Suffrage movement go back at least to 1848, when the first Woman's Rights Convention was held in Seneca Falls, New York. "From the faith of the suffrage movement came 2 great idea, the idea that a nonpartisan organization could provide political education and experience which would contribute to the growth of the citizen and thus assure the success of democracy. The League of Women Voters was founded upon that idea."¹

Throughout the years since its founding, the League of Women Voters is the only organization that has maintained an agenda of promoting and protecting the voting rights of all citizens. Therefore, it was most appropriate that the LWVCO join a coalition formed by the Colorado Committee for Women's History in 1990 to plan celebrations of 100 years of voting rights for women in Colorado. The League endorsed the coalition's activities and named Wilma Davidson its representative on the steering committee. Margaret McNamara became active in the coalition in 1993. Local Leagues were encouraged to participate in the planning of community events to celebrate the accomplishments of Colorado women during the century of 1893-1993 in which they have voted in all elections.

Plans were made for a traveling museum exhibit, parades, a history of women's suffrage, biographies of women legislators, sale of souvenir items, conferences, newspaper articles, resolutions in the General Assembly, a proclamation by the Governor, dinners, receptions, and other events. This history is part of the celebration. Plagued by lack of support, not all plans succeeded. Apparently, only a limited number of people have enough interest in women's history to go to functions or spend even small amounts of money promote events. The League of Women Voters of Colorado was an endorsing organization as were the local Leagues in Arapahoe County, Denver, Grand Junction, Larimer County, Montrose, Pikes Peak, and Pueblo. Others may have participated in community celebrations, but none were reported.

Sales of tee shirts and coffee mugs with the suffrage centennial logo were moderately successful. The 25-page commemorative booklet, **The Colorado Suffrage Centennial**, written by Rosemary Fetter and Marcia Goldstein was popular at \$2.00 each. Members of the coalition steering committee and the Colorado Women's History Committee made many presentations of a slide-show and skit, and they gave speeches about the suffrage campaign and the women who campaigned for voting rights. The professional museum exhibit was seen only at a limited number of places because adequate funding could not be obtained.

Suffrage celebrations and the media.

Complaints regarding lack of publicity were frequent at coalition meetings. However, the newspapers did cover — and included pictures of — the activity at the legislature when Senator Pat Pascoe and Representative Ruth Wright introduced the Suffrage Celebration resolution in the 1993 session.

The **Rocky Mountain News** published an article about the suffrage campaign once each month during the year. Several other columns and articles were printed during the latter part of the centennial year of 1993, The **Rocky Mountain News** article "*100 Women of Influence*" gave brief biographical information

¹ 6 League of Women Voters. **Forty Years of a Great Idea** (Washington: League of Women Voters of the United States, 1950).

on the women chosen by the coalition's committee. "*A Vote for history: Women's suffrage a flop, declared pundits in 1900s,*" by Karen Abbott, although quite negative in tone, it did include the sentence: "By 1928 – eight years after women won the right to vote nationwide – Colorado had an active chapter of the non-partisan League of Women Voters." That was the only mention made of the League and its connection with woman suffrage!²

Woman Suffrage celebration resolution.

**CONCERNING THE CELEBRATION OF ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF
WOMAN SUFFRAGE**

Be it resolved by the Senate of the Fifty-eighth General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the House of Representatives concurring herein: That we, the members of the Fifty-eighth General Assembly of the State of Colorado, hereby encourage all people of the State of Colorado to join with us as we prepare to celebrate in the year 1993, the landmark one-hundredth anniversary of Colorado women's suffrage.³

Sen. Pat Pascoe, a member of LWV Denver, and Rep. Ruth Wright, a member of LWV Boulder Valley, were chief sponsors of Senate Joint Resolution 92-16 Concerning the Celebration of One Hundred Years of Woman Suffrage. The Resolution was co-sponsored by ninety-nine of the 100 legislators, passed unanimously in both houses of the General Assembly, and was signed by the governor.

When she introduced SJR 92-16, Sen. Pascoe came to the podium representing Helen Ring Robinson, the first woman elected to the Colorado Senate. Dressed in the style of that time, she described the circumstances of a woman elected to the previously all-male Senate in 1913. Her presentation brought a standing ovation by the Senators, staff members, reporters, and people in the galleries. Sen. Bonnie Allison's motion that Sen. Pascoe's remarks be recorded in the SENATE JOURNAL for the day was passed with unanimous consent.⁴ These are Sen. Pascoe's words:

My name is Helen Ring Robinson, or Mrs. Senator Robinson, as I was known in these chambers. I was the first woman senator elected in Colorado, serving from 1913 to 1917. Indeed, I was the first woman senator elected in the entire country.¹ I am happy to be back in the Senate Chamber, Mr. President, to help celebrate the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage in Colorado, because that movement was very dear to me. You probably wonder what it was like to be the first woman in the Senate. "At first the other senators were conscious of the fact that one of their members was a woman, but in a short time they forgot all about that and treated me as one of themselves, which I considered a compliment. The only difference I remarked was that they did remove their hats and cigars when speaking to me."

I moved to Colorado from Maine after my graduation from Wellesley College. Here I joined the editorial staff of the Rocky Mountain News and I also headed the book section of the Denver Times. I was

² [Note 7 in print ed.] Newspaper articles:

Theresa Funke. "Colorado's Suffragists," **Colorado Woman News** (November 1993), p. 25 ff.

Joanne Ditmer. "Let the Women Vote! State marks 100 years of rights," **Denver Post** (November 7, 1993), p. 1C ff.

Peter Blake. "One-woman, one-vote system celebrates a century," **Rocky Mountain News** (November 7, 1993}, p. 10A.

Rebecca Jones. "/00 Women of Influence," Rocky Mountain News (November 8, 1993), p. 3D ff.

Karen Abbott. "A vote for history: Women's suffrage a flop, declared pundits in 1900s," **Rocky Mountain News** (November 11, 1993), p. 8D.

³ SJR 92-16 CONCERNING THE CELEBRATION OF ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE, Second Regular Session, Fifty-eighth General Assembly, April 23, 1992. [Note 8 in print ed.]

⁴ Colorado General Assembly. Senate Journal, April 23, 1992, pp. 1143-1145. [Note 9 in print ed.]

a member and president of the Denver Women's Press Club which still has a clubhouse just a block from here. My husband was a Denver attorney.² Very active in suffrage work from the earliest days, I was a leading members of the Women's Independent Party which was formed in 1909 "to secure good men, free from machine control for various elective office." However, I was elected to the Senate in 1912 on the Democratic ticket? My colleagues immediately proposed to elect me President Pro Tem, but I declared with true senatorial courtesy that it belonged to a veteran holdover senator, and not to a newcomer.² When I was elected, I told the press "There will be so many men there that I shall let them look after themselves and I shall take it upon myself to look after the women and children. I wish to be spokeswoman of the women and children in Colorado in the legislature, and I shall feel honored to introduce any laws drawn up for their welfare and protection. I believe a woman who has qualified as a capable mother and housewife can qualify as a capable legislator."³ And during my term of office I succeeded in passing a minimum wage law for women and children over the opposition of machine leader Sen. Alva Adams, later governor. One of my bills to allow women to sit on juries failed, unfortunately. My other great love was the women's suffrage movement. In that respect, Colorado was far ahead of most of the nation. To promote the right of women to vote, I spoke in nearly every state in the union, trying to demonstrate that a woman politician was not some sort of aberration. For instance, I told the Equal Suffrage League in New York's Astor Hotel: "All those stories you read in the ladies' lingerie journals are false. Our feminine voters and officeholders do not have faces like vinegar jugs. Neither do they drink cocktails and highballs and stuff ballot boxes as the 'antis' say they do. If the men ever tried to take the vote away from the women in Colorado, there would be things doing there that would make little old London look like Sleepy Hollow."⁵

The members of the Denver Women's Press Club have told me how hard they worked for suffrage in Colorado. When they heard the news that the ballot proposal had passed overwhelmingly in November of 1893, they were so excited that they wanted to celebrate somehow, so they all stood and sang the Doxology. I saw that same kind of sisterhood as I spoke around the country. The Denver Republican quoted me when I returned as follows:⁶

"One who has not been in the midst of it cannot realize the significance and zeal of the great woman's movement going on in the East.... I never realized it. The fervidness of it. The white flame that burned in its midst inspired me. I heard women preach with the same white flame with which Peter the Hermit preached his crusade. Once I wished I had lived in the stirring time, in the times when men fought with the sword for their ideals and gave their lives for causes dear to their souls. I thought of these times as I saw these women burning with the spirit of a cause to them as dear as life itself. One of the things that impressed me was the wonderful feeling of sex loyalty and solidarity. I saw this in Baltimore, where young women with faces like opening flowers and eyes shining like the stars of Bethlehem marched together with women worn by toil; I saw it in New York; I saw it everywhere.⁷ My aim was to allay that haunting panicky fear among the men that when the women get the ballot they would take the American home out of the back yard and shoot it full of holes. I spoke not as a senator nor a politician, but as a housewife. I told what equal suffrage would mean to women as housewives and mothers, what relation the garbage can bore to the ballot and I think I gave a side of the question not before presented and one that impressed the men."⁸

Sister Senators, I greet you. I only thought there would be more of you by now. Many of the women of Colorado expected me to become Governor or Congressman after my term in the Senate. And Brother Senators, I thank you for supporting women's issues. And I thank each and every one of you for co-sponsoring this resolution. With that, Mr. President, I would move the adoption of Senate Joint Resolution 92-16 and suggest the use of the roll call throughout the century, all the men and women senators here in flesh or spirit.

[Notes 5-8 are numbered 1-4 in print ed. The first note umbers 1-2-3 marked on p. 10-11 have no notes attached.]

⁵ Frances Melrose, "Helen Robinson left political mark," **Rocky Mountain News Sunday Magazine** (1989).

⁶ **Denver Republican**, March 23, 1913

⁷ **Denver Republican**, November 8, 1912.

⁸ **Denver Republican**, July 10, 1913.

Resolution passes in the House of Representatives.

When Rep. Ruth Wright introduced SJR 92-16 on the floor of the House of Representatives, she portrayed Martha Conine, the fourth woman elected to the House of Representatives of the Colorado General Assembly. On the day before adjournment of the 1992 session, House members passed the Resolution without a dissenting vote.⁹ Rep. Wright's presentation follows:

I move SJR 16 concerning the celebration of 100 years of women's suffrage in Colorado. As you know, in January of 1893, the General Assembly placed the issue of women's suffrage on the November ballot, and the male voters of Colorado voted overwhelmingly to give women the vote, thus Colorado became the first state in the Union to approve women's suffrage in a popular election. This culminated more than 25 years of effort by men and women alike.

You may wonder who I am. My name is Martha Conine. No, I am not the first woman to be elected to the Colorado House of Representatives, But I assembled a notebook which is still on file at the Denver Library, so citizens of 1992 know more about me than my other women colleagues.

There were three women elected in 1894, the year right after women were given the vote. They were Clara Cressingham, Carrie Holly, and Frances Klock. Beth Clara and Frances came out of Arapahoe County, like I did — Denver was part of Arapahoe County then — while Carrie came from Pueblo. They went right to work on women's issues and passed laws which raised the age of consent from 16 to 18 years of age and gave mothers an equal right to their children.

Then more of us were elected in 1896: Olive Butler, Evangeline Hertz, and myself. Of these six, four were Republican, one was a Populist, and I was non-partisan. I'll have to explain that one. When we women got the vote in 1893, we realized that we were really ignorant on political topics, so women in our clubs went right to work informing ourselves on all social and economic subjects. The result was that in Denver we soon had about 2,000 women thoroughly posted on all matters of reform. When the national silver movement started to work up a legislative ticket, they wanted someone to represent club women, The choice fell on me, being President of the North Side Women's Club of Denver. With the earnest support of the club women, I was elected. I must say that I was totally unprepared for the political experience of caucusing and scrambling. As I said at the time, "I have a pet bill which seeks to remedy many of the evils of our present methods of elections and will do away with the spoils system. The past week has taught me to keep aloof from partisanship . . . One of the surprises of the week to me was to discover that men who are the soul of honor in their private business affairs are — well, there is a great distinction between their public business methods and the administration of their private affairs."

I was also keenly interested in what you now call "Corrections." It was my opinion that "It would be economy to spend some money for the help of the boys and girls to prevent them from becoming criminals, instead of spending much more money to keep them in the penitentiary after they have joined the criminal ranks. We are all proud of our Capitol Building, with its grounds and decoration, but I would rather have less money spent on that building and spend some for the protection of the boys and girls of the state.

As I look about me, I see many women colleagues in the Colorado House. I understand that Colorado is one of the highest states in women representatives — though there is still a ways to go. There have been only 120 women who have served here since 1893.

I wish all of the members of the House success in your endeavors to make Colorado the best it can be - and, please, don't forget the children.

I urge your support of SJR 16.

⁹ Colorado General Assembly, House of Representatives Journal, May 5, 1992. [Note 10 in print ed.]

Governor's Honorary Proclamation.

Gov. Roy Romer had signed the commemorative resolution SJR 92-16 following the 1992 session of the General Assembly. The coalition for the celebration requested that he issue a proclamation early in the 1993 session that would call attention to the legislation passed in the 1893 session that culminated in the popular vote that year that gained voting rights for Colorado women. Public announcement of the Honorary Proclamation was made on February 9, 1993.

Suffrage coalition parades on St. Patrick's Day.

Coalition steering committee members decided to form a contingent to march in Denver's St. Patrick's Day Parade on March 13, 1993, instead of arranging for a separate parade to celebrate the suffrage centennial. Even though it was a cold and windy day, approximately 100 women, men, and children marched and carried suffrage banners and signs, many of them in costumes of the 1893 period. League members were there with a League banner.

"A Century of Women Making History."

To celebrate the Colorado Women's Suffrage Centennial, the Colorado Committee for Women's History and the Denver Women's Press Club sponsored a dinner and program to honor Colorado Women in Organizations Past and Present, on March 25, 1993, at the Southeast Marriott Hotel.

Carolyn Stefanco, who has written of the Colorado organizations in which women worked to gain the right to vote, gave the keynote address: "Networking for Social Change: Women's Organizations in History." About 125 people watched and applauded as nineteen organizations nominated two women each - a founding member and a current member - to receive recognition for their contribution to the spirit of "women networking for social change." The League's selections:

MABEL CORY COSTIGAN was active in women's voting rights for many years. She served on the Board of Directors of the National American Women's Suffrage Association. In 1920, one year after the 19th Amendment was ratified, she helped found and was a member of the National League of Women Voters. Carrying her work to Colorado, she founded the League of Women Voters of Colorado in 1929.

WILMA DAVIDSON has a long interest in women's issues. A past-president and frequent board member of the LWV, she has written a number of publications including a history of the League, a document of women's progress through the state Constitution, and an overview of women's suffrage in Colorado. She lobbied for state laws on domestic violence and continues her activity at the legislature on women's and social issues. She supported efforts to increase educational opportunities for females as a member of her local school board and through work related to Title IX.

Twenty-one organizations that have been active in Colorado for seventy years or more were also honored for their support of women.

History Group of the University of Colorado at Denver

Marcia Goldstein, a graduate student in history, and Professor Tom Noel led the History Group in planning celebrations of woman suffrage in Colorado. There were exhibits and parades and conferences on the Auraria campus in March - for Women's History Month - and again on May 1 of 1993. SHOULD WOMEN VOTE? was the topic of the great debate held at historic Central Presbyterian Church the

afternoon of May 1, with several hundred people – many in 1893 costume — in the audience to cheer on their favorites in the debate. Congresswoman Pat Schroeder appeared as Susan B. Anthony, and presented arguments in favor of woman suffrage so convincingly that there was an overwhelming vote in favor of letting women vote.¹⁰ State President Betsy McBride gave tribute to the League during the morning session held on the Auraria campus. Humor was combined with history ‘i in the presentations of specialists in women's voting rights in Colorado.

"Suffragists ejected from legislative BB-Que at Pueblo State Fair."¹¹

In a shocking display of rudeness and disrespect for our foremothers, security forces of the Pueblo Chamber of Commerce forcefully escorted three suffragists out of a VIP barbecue honoring state legislators. The incident occurred after the suffragists held an old-fashioned suffrage rally on the Colorado State Fair fairgrounds.

Enthusiastic supporters from a prominent elected official's office had invited CCW members to the VIP barbeque, stating that "a lot of the legislators would love to see you and your banners there!" When the women arrived, partygoers flocked over to congratulate them and inquire about the suffrage cause and the centennial celebration. Immediately, security guards insisted that the suffrage delegation leave, stating, "This is a private party, and our sponsors feel that your activities are detracting from the message they wish to send to the official guests!" The women were ejected when they replied, "Don't your sponsors support women's suffrage?"

The incident, while exasperating, was an instructive example of how Colorado suffragists must have been treated 2 century ago. We had only hoped some progress had been made!

NOTE: The "prominent elected official" was Senator Hank Brown (R-CO). The "suffragists" were Catherine Montini, Leslie Burger, and Marcia Goldstein. Discrimination or sexual harassment were alive and well in Pueblo — at least by some people.

Western Women Wild With Joy.

The year-long celebrations of the centennial of voting rights for Colorado women culminated in October and November of 1993 with a number of activities that carried out the "wild with joy" theme. The calendar lists events and shows both the original photo from the Queen Bee and one of 1993 celebration organizers: Marcia Goldstein, Catherine Montini, Rebecca Hunt, and Bridget Cook.

"Western Women Still Wild With Joy" was the theme of the Suffrage Centennial Grande Finale Banquet which honored the one hundred women who made history in Colorado. League members on the list included: Mabel Cory Costigan, Elisa Damascio Palladino, Josephine Roche, Eudochia Bell Smith, and Ruth Stockton.

A final event of the year-long celebration was an elegant high tea and reception at the Governor's Residence to honor women elected officials serving Colorado since 1894, Aliso honored were former First Lady Dottie Lamm, State Treasurer Gail Schoettler, former Secretary of State Mary Estill Buchanan, and

¹⁰ Tom Noel. "Come witness a miracle and celebrate women's rights on May 1," **Denver Post** (April 17, 1993). [Note 11 in print ed.]

¹¹ "Suffragists ejected from Legislative BB-Que at Pueblo State Fair," **Colorado Woman News**, (November 1993), p. 27. [Note 12 in print ed.]

Congresswoman Pat Schroeder. Of the women who were Colorado legislators, these answered “present” to the roll call:

Lela S. Gilbert – House 1956-62
Jane Woodhouse – House 1956-60
Allegra Saunders – Senate 1958-66
Jean Bain – House 1960-72
Betty Ann Dittmore – House 1968-78
Dorothy Witherspoon – House 1974-30
Jeanne Faatz – House 1978-94
Margaret "Molly" Markert – 1982-86
Carol Taylor-Little – House 1982-88
Marleen Fish ~- House 1984-92
Betty Swenson — House 1984-92
Pat Pascoe – Senate 1988-92
Mary Blue – House 1992-94

Past and present legislators and other guests were greeted by Congresswoman Pat Schroeder and former First Lady Dottie Lamm. Marcia Goldstein, President of the Colorado Committee for Women's History, introduced the honored guests. The program opened with Leslie Berger singing suffrage songs. Rosemarie McDermott appeared as Katherine Lee Bates, the author of "America the Beautiful," then sang the words, accompanied by Phyllis Tremmel. Senator Dennis Gallagher recited his "Ode to the Woman Voter." Pat Pascoe, who came as Helen Ring Robinson, commented on the experiences of the first woman senator and read the General Assembly's Suffrage Centennial Resolution. Representative Jeanne Faatz spoke on "100 years of change in Colorado's General Assembly." The Governor's Suffrage Centennial Proclamation was read.

League members Betsy McBride, Margaret McNamara, Marilyn Shuey, Carolyn Thompson, Gerry Cummins, and Wilma Davidson joined with approximately two hundred women and men gathered gathered to celebrate the centennial of voting rights for Colorado women. The reception was coordinated by Catherine Montini, Rosemarie McDermott, and Kathryn Gaynor. .

Closing the year of celebrations of the suffrage centennial, Congresswoman Pat Schroeder arranged a ceremony to commemorate the suffrage movement. On December 17, 1993, she laid a wreath on the plaque on the Interstate Bank Plaza at 17th and California, which was the location of Unity Church where the Colorado Equal Suffrage Association was founded in 1876. It was a fitting recognition of those intrepid women who had such an important part in gaining for Colorado women the right to vote.

Women legislators honor "the first."

The National Order of Women Legislators and the Women of the House of Representatives of the Sixtieth Colorado General Assembly gave a “morning tea” on April 27, 1995, to honor the first women elected to a state legislature in the United States. When the House convened that morning, they presented a historical commemorative reading of selected speeches of the three pioneer lawmakers by present-day legislators. Frances Klock was portrayed by Rep. Jeanne Adkins; Clara Cressingham by Rep. Vickie Agler; and Carrie Holly by Rep. Joyce Lawrence. They were joined by other women and men of the House of Representatives — all appropriately costumed. Rep. Martha Kreutz then introduced **House Joint Resolution 95-1023 Observing 1995 as the centennial for women legislators, recognizing the vital role they play, and commending them for past, current, and future accomplishments.** It passed unanimously.¹²

¹² Colorado Genera! Assembly. **House Journal**, April 27, 1995, pp. 1583–1584 and 1599–1603.
[Note 13 in print ed.]

STATE OF COLORADO

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
136 State Capitol
Denver, Colorado 80203-1792
Phone (303) 866-2471



HONORARY PROCLAMATION

Roy Romer
Governor

COLORADO WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE CENTENNIAL YEAR 1993

WHEREAS, on January 16, 1893, "a Bill to extend the suffrage to women of lawful age and otherwise qualified, according to the provisions of article seven, section two, of the Constitution of Colorado," was introduced by Representative J.T. Heath of Montrose and Delta County; and

WHEREAS, this bill was subsequently passed by both houses of the Colorado General Assembly, signed by Governor Davis H. Waite and referred to the electorate; and

WHEREAS, in the General Election held on November 7, 1893, a majority of 35,798 electors voted to approve woman suffrage in all elections; and

WHEREAS, women in Colorado have voted in every Colorado election since 1893 and voters have elected 130 women to represent them in the Colorado General Assembly during the past 100 years; and

WHEREAS, the Colorado electorate has selected eight women to serve in the Colorado Senate and 26 to serve in the House of Representatives for the 1993 session and women now serve as secretary of state, state treasurer and state attorney general and Denver is represented by a woman in the U.S. Congress; and

WHEREAS, women hold many elective and appointive offices in both state and local governments and continue to be politically active as voters, candidates and elected officials in this state; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that Coloradans recognize the past 100 years of achievements and contributions made by Colorado women;

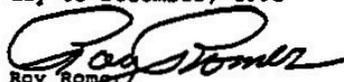
NOW, THEREFORE, I, Roy Romer, Governor of Colorado, proclaim 1993 as

COLORADO WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE CENTENNIAL YEAR

in the State of Colorado.



GIVEN under my hand and the Executive Seal of the State of Colorado, this fourth day of December, 1992


Roy Romer
Governor

Second Regular Session

Fifty-eighth General Assembly

LLS NO. @92 0756/1

STATE OF COLORADO

BY SENATORS Pascoe, Allison, Ament, Bird, Bishop, Blickensderfer, Cassidy, Fenlon, Gallagher, Hoeff, Hopper, J. Johnson, Leads, Mares, Martinez, McCormick, Meiklejohn, Mendez, Mutzebaugh, Norton, Owens, Pastore, Peterson, Powers, Rizzuto, Roberts, Schaffer, Schroeder, Strickland, Tebedo, Traylor, Trujillo, Wattenberg, Wells, and Wham; also REPRESENTATIVES Wright, Foster, Rupert, Grant, Faatz, Acquafresca, Adkins, Agler, Anderson, Arveschoug, Benavidez, Berry, Chlouber, Coffman, DeHerrera, Duke, Dyer, Eisenach, Intz, Epps, Fagan, Fish, Fleming, Grampsas, Greenwood, Henning, R. Hernandez, T. Hernandez, Werke, S. Johnson, Jones, June, Kerns, Killian, Knox, Kopel, Lawrence, Martin, McInnis, Miller, Moellenberg, Neale, Owen, Pankey, Prinster, Ratterree, Redder, Reeser, Reeves, Romero, Ruddick, Salaz, Schauer, Shoemaker, Snyder, Sullivan, Swenson, Tanner, Thiebaut, Tucker, Webb, D. Williams, S. Williams, and Young. SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 92-14

1 CONCERNING THE CELEBRATION OF ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF WOMEN'S
2 SUFFRAGE IN COLORADO.

3 WHEREAS, On July 19, 1848, the first national Women's
4 Rights Convention was held at Seneca Falls, New York, and that
5 convention adopted the first national declaration calling for
6 full voting rights for women; and

7 WHEREAS, The issue of women's suffrage was debated for
8 the first time in the Colorado Territorial Legislature in the
9 early 1870's, an effort spearheaded by Governor and Mrs.
10 Edward McCook; and

11 WHEREAS, The issue of women's suffrage was hotly debated
12 at the Colorado Constitutional Convention in 1875-1876, under
13 the leadership of Representative Agipeta Vigil of Huerfano
14 County and Judge H.P.H. Bromwell, resulting in a
15 constitutional provision to grant women the right to vote in
16 local school board elections and to require the General
17 Assembly to enact a public referendum on the issue; and

18 WHEREAS, The Colorado Women's Suffrage Association held
19 its founding convention at Denver on January 10, 1876, at
20 which Dr. Alida C. Avery was elected president; and

21 WHEREAS, The General Assembly first placed the issue of
22 women's suffrage on the statewide ballot in 1877, when it was
23 defeated by a popular vote of more than 2 to 1 in spite of
24 vigorous campaigning by the Colorado Women's Suffrage
25 Association; and

26 WHEREAS, The women of Denver formed a variety of
27 professional, social, and reform organizations, including the
28 Fortnightly Club founded by Ione Hanna, the Ladies Relief
29 Society founded by Elizabeth Byers, and the Colorado Women's
30 Christian Temperance Union, founded by Mary Shields and Albina

Capital letters indicate new material to be added to existing statute.
Dashes through the words indicate deletions from existing statute.

1 Washington, which provided a network to push for a variety of
2 reform issues which would lead to broader influence and the
3 gradual education of women and men on the value of the female
4 franchise; and

5 WHEREAS, Mrs. L. E. McCarthy, the first woman to run for
6 public office in Colorado, ran in 1881 for State
7 Superintendent of Schools, as nominee of the Rocky Mountain
8 Social League, an organization of Denver socialists, although
9 she was defeated; and

10 WHEREAS, The Colorado Equal Suffrage Association, after a
11 period of inactivity, reorganized itself and elected officers,
12 including Women's Christian Temperance Union leader Louise
13 Tyler as president, and writers Ellis Meredith, Minnie
14 Reynolds, and Patience Stapleton, teacher Martha Pease,
15 physician Mary B. Bates, and Negro Club leader Elizabeth P.
16 Ensley, to fill other offices; and

17 WHEREAS, Minnie Reynolds, founder of the Denver Woman's
18 Press Club, engaged the editorial support of all mainstream
19 newspapers statewide, including those in Denver, and Colorado
20 "boosters" began to tout women's suffrage as a mark of the
21 state's moral stability and progressive political climate,
22 stating, "The best elements in all parties [are] for equal
23 suffrage"; and

24 WHEREAS, In January, 1893, the General Assembly again
25 placed the issue of women's suffrage on the ballot for the
26 next general election, and, on November 7, 1893, the voters of
27 Colorado, who were still exclusively male, voted
28 overwhelmingly to give women the vote, thus becoming the first
29 state in the union to approve women's suffrage in a popular
30 election, culminating more than twenty-five years of effort on
31 the part of many courageous Colorado women and men; now,
32 therefore,

33 Be It Resolved by the Senate of the Fifty-eighth General
34 Assembly of the State of Colorado, the House of
35 Representatives concurring herein:

36 That we, the members of the Fifty-eighth General Assembly
37 of the State of Colorado, hereby encourage all people of the
38 State of Colorado to join with us as we prepare to celebrate
39 in the year 1993 the landmark one-hundredth anniversary of
40 Colorado women's suffrage.

First Regular Session

Sixtieth General Assembly

LLS NO. R95-0124.01 CJ

STATE OF COLORADO

BY REPRESENTATIVES Kreutz, Morrison, Faatz, Adkins, Agler, DeGette, Lyle, Reeser, Allen, Anderson, Epps, June, Keller, Kerns, Lamm, Lawrence, Musgrave, Nichol, Reeves, Snyder, and Tucker;
also SENATORS Wham, Hopper, and Rupert.

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 95-1023

1 WHEREAS, In 1893, Colorado was the first state in which
2 all registered voters voted for the rights of women to vote; and

3 WHEREAS, In 1894, the women of Colorado voted in the first
4 general election after women's suffrage had become a law; and

5 WHEREAS, On November 6, 1894, the first three women ever
6 elected to a state legislature in the United States were elected
7 to the Colorado General Assembly; and

8 WHEREAS, These women, Carrie Clyde Holly of Pueblo and
9 Clara Cressingham and Frances S. Klock of Denver, were elected
10 to the Colorado House of Representatives and were sworn in on
11 January 2, 1895; and

12 WHEREAS, Because U.S. senators were elected by state
13 legislatures prior to 1913, Holly, Cressingham, and Klock became
14 the first women to vote for a U.S. senator when the Colorado
15 House and Senate met in joint session on January 16, 1895; and

16 WHEREAS, Holly, Cressingham, and Klock initiated
17 successful legislation by giving mothers equal rights with
18 fathers to their children, raising the age of consent from 16
19 to 18, and creating a home for delinquent girls; and

20 WHEREAS, Holly became the first woman lawmaker to
21 introduce a bill; Cressingham, as secretary of the Republican
22 caucus, was the first woman to fill a leadership position; and
23 Klock was the first woman to chair a committee, Indian and
24 Veteran Affairs, and was the first woman to preside over a state
25 legislature; and

26 WHEREAS, In January 1913, Helen Ring Robinson became the
27 first woman elected to the state senate, being the second woman
28 in the nation to achieve that office; and

*Capital letters indicate new material to be added to existing statute.
Dashes through the words indicate deletions from existing statute.*

29 WHEREAS, In the mid-1950's, Elizabeth Pellet became the
30 first woman elected to a top leadership position to the Colorado
31 House of Representatives, serving as house minority leader for
32 one term; and

33 WHEREAS, In 1979, Ruth Stockton served as president
34 pro-tem of the senate, and in 1981, became the first chairwoman
35 of the Joint Budget Committee; and

36 WHEREAS, In 1986, Ruth Wright was elected house minority
37 leader, making her only the second woman ever elected to a top
38 leadership position to the Colorado House of Representatives;
39 and

40 WHEREAS, By the end of the 19th century, at least 16 women
41 had served in state legislatures in the states of Colorado,
42 Utah, and Idaho; and

43 WHEREAS, These women, including many others, past and
44 present, are committed to social, political, and economic
45 equality for women, having a positive impact on our state; and

46 WHEREAS, The General Assembly recognizes and respects the
47 commitment and work these women have accomplished in the past
48 one hundred years; now, therefore,

49 *Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the*
50 *Sixtieth General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the Senate*
51 *concurring herein:*

52 That we, the members of the General Assembly, observe 1995
53 as the centennial for women legislators, recognizing the vital
54 role they play and commending them for past, current, and future
55 accomplishments, dedication, and contributions to the State of
56 Colorado.



George Kochanec Jr./Rocky Mountain News

Senator introduces suffrage memorial resolution

Sen. Pat Pascoe, D-Denver, dressed to look like Colorado's first female senator, asks her colleagues to commemorate the centennial in 1993 of women's suffrage in Colorado, the first state to enact it. The first woman state senator, Helen Ring Robinson of Denver, a *Rocky Mountain News* editorial staffer, served in 1913-17. In 1869, Wyoming territory let women vote for the first time anywhere in America. Pascoe said the male senators eventually got used to Robinson, but still removed their hats and cigars when speaking to her.



Karl Koski/The Capitol Reporter

Rep. Ruth Wright, dressed in 19th century garb, presents resolution commemorating Colorado as the first state in the union to grant women the vote, in 1893.



Marcia Goldstein, Colorado Women's History Committee
Suffrage Centennial Reception 1993



COLORADO SUFFRAGE CENTENNIAL



Senator Pat Pascoe
Suffrage Centennial Reception 1993



Rep. Peggy Kerns
Suffrage Centennial Reception 1993



**Women Legislators
Suffrage Centennial Reception 1993**



**League members at Suffrage Reception 1993
L-R: Marilyn Shuey, Gerry Cummins, Betsy McBride,
Carolyn Thompson, Wilma Davidson, Margaret McNamara**



**Rep. Jean Bain & Sen. Allegra Saunders
Suffrage Centennial Reception 1993**



**Rep. Lela Gilbert & Congresswoman Pat Schroeder
Suffrage Centennial Reception 1993**